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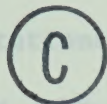
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

"GOD," "MAN", AND "RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS":

INTERPRETATIONS AND REINTERPRETATIONS

OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY OF PAUL TILlich

by



JOHN ALBERT JENKINSON

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "'God', 'Man', and 'Religious Symbols': Interpretations and Re-Interpretations of the Philosophical Theology of Paul Tillich" submitted by John Albert Jenkinson in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

ABSTRACT

The title of this study indicates that the relationships between man, symbols and God in the theology of Paul Tillich are explored. According to the theory of correlation analysis of philosophy of man's existential predicament raises questions which can only be answered by theology using symbols expressive of man's ultimate concern. The basic triad of ideas concerning man is essence-existence-essentialization. The concept of existence was carefully examined and in the interests of clarity it was found necessary to use the notions of existence₁ and existence₂. Symbols are not necessary in the essential realm or in complete essentialization, but are necessary in existential existence because of man's estrangement from God.

Tillich's epistemology was explored, particularly his concept of "self-world" and its meaning, before considering the place of symbols in the God-man relationship. The basic criterion for something to be a religious symbol is the idea of participation, but this proved to be a very confused notion until it was analysed into four distinct types. When the other characteristics of symbols were considered, it appeared that Tillich thought that the opening of man's inner consciousness to the depth of being was as important as the notion of participation

The referent of all religious symbols was examined through the only non-symbolic statement about God, namely, "God is Being-itself."

The various possible relationships between Being-itself, Being and beings were investigated. The concepts of "being-as-a-whole" and "the totality of beings" led to a consideration of the structure of being and the ontological elements.

Tillich's complete rejection of the concept of a "supranatural God" naturally led to an investigation of Tillich's naturalism. The place of man and God in nature necessitated an analysis of naturalism pantheism, monism and atheism. Spinoza's God or Nature was considered to be a good starting point for an examination of the relationships of Tillich's ideas to these "isms." The ideas of Spinoza in relevant fields were compared and contrasted with those of Tillich to ascertain the status of Tillich's notions. The decision is by no means clear cut but Tillich's Ground of Being does suggest that he had monistic leanings. His statement that some pantheism is an integral part of religion was noticed.

Tillich's self-acclaimed task was to interpret the Christian message for his own secular generation and for that purpose he employed many novel explications. The unique contributions of Tillich are his ability to counteract the secular "Death of God" movement, to distil from the various philosophical and theological positions certain concepts which he synthesized into a coherent whole, and to confront the positivists by his use of linguistic analysis in his theological re-interpretations.

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ABBREVIATIONS FOR TILlich'S WORKS

In order to avoid unnecessary repetition, and because of the number of references to his writings, the following abbreviations are used for Tillich's works.

- B.R. Biblical Religions and the Search for Ultimate Reality, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955.
- C.B. The Courage to Be,
New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952.
- D.F. Dynamics of Faith,
New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957.
- I.H. The Interpretation of History trans. N.A. Rasetzki
and E. L. Talmey, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons,
1936.
- L.P.J. Love, Power, and Justice,
New York: Oxford University Press, 1954.
- N.B. The New Being,
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955.
- P.E. The Protestant Era trans. James Luther Adams,
Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1948.
- PERSPECTIVES Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant
Theology Ed. by Carl E. Braaten, New York: Harper
and Row, 1967.
- R.E.T. Religious Experience and Truth ed. Sidney Hook,
New York: New York University Press, 1961.
- R.S. The Religious Situation trans. H. Richard Niebuhr,
New York: Meridian Books, 1956.
- S.F. The Shaking of the Foundations,
New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948.
- S.T. Systematic Theology Volumes I - III,
Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1951, 1957, and
1963.
- T.C. Theology of Culture ed. Robert C. Kimball,
New York: Oxford University Press, 1959.

- T.P.T. The Theology of Paul Tillich ed. Charles W. Kegley
and Robert W. Bretall, New York: Macmillan, 1961.
- U.C. Ultimate Concern: Dialogues with Students ed. D.
Mackenzie Brown, London: S. C. M. Press, 1965.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century has produced a remarkable number of theologians who have attempted to interpret the Christian tradition in the light of contemporary society. These attempts at a new interpretation appear to be due in the main, to two very distinct causes. One of these causes may be termed religious and the other linguistic. The religious cause which required action was that the people had abandoned God. T.S. Eliot has aptly stated the problem:

But it seems that something has happened that has never happened before: though we know not just when, or why, or how, or where. Men have left God, not for other gods, they say, but for no god, and this has never happened before.¹

The second cause arose from a change of attitude in philosophy initiated by such philosophers as G.E. Moore, Bertrand Russell and L. Wittgenstein and the so-called British analytical school, and A.J. Ayer, R. Carnap, A. Pap and others, philosophers of the Vienna Circle tradition. The philosophical impact caused a crisis to develop which particularly affected the understanding of religious language. The Logical Positivists, using the tools of logical analysis and adopting scientific criteria as their principles of investigation very confidently relegated religious discourse to the realm

¹T.S. Eliot, Collected Poems 1909-1962 From "Choruses from 'The Rock'" (New York: Harcourt Brace, and World Inc., 1963).

of the cognitively meaningless.² This philosophical pronouncement appeared to separate theologians into two classes: one class which just ignored the statements made by positivists on the ground that theology and science are two distinct spheres, and the other class of religious thinkers which called for or commenced a radical and critical examination of the meaning and clarity of religious language.

Paul Tillich was a philosopher/theologian who saw the need for investigation in this area, for he remarked that "we are in a confusion of language in theology and philosophy and related subjects which has hardly been surpassed in anytime in history."³ Looking critically at words, especially those used in religious services, Tillich saw that these words no longer communicated what they initially did, or what they were intended to communicate since "we no longer have words in which the powerfulness of the word pulsates."⁴ No wonder people had left God. But protest against "dead" symbols or words is not enough, and Tillich set himself a double task: to confront the Logical Positivists (and their successors) and to bring to religion, new life with new words and symbols, and a new, novel if necessary, interpretation to replace that which had lost its influence.

²A.J. Ayer, Language Truth and Logic (New York: Dover Publications, 1936), p. 115.

³P. Tillich, "Religious Symbols and our Knowledge of God," The Christian Scholar, XXXVIII (1955), 189.

⁴J.L. Adams, Paul Tillich's Philosophy of Culture, Science, and Religion (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), p. 2.

Tillich, in an autobiographical essay, says that "a part of my life belongs to the nineteenth century, especially if one assumes the nineteenth to end (as one should) with August 1, 1914, the beginning of the First World War."⁵ After the end of that War, in which Tillich served as a Chaplain, he felt, so he informs us, a loss of faith and a "shaking of the very foundations" of his religious belief.⁶ As early as 1915, Tillich had come to reject the conventional belief that God was a being, and as early as this, he speaks of the "God above God."⁷ After the War, Tillich began to write about the split between the church and the people, especially the returned soldiers. In Tillich's opinion, the language used in theology, whatever value it may have for the expert in the field, tended to create a gulf between the church and the world, and between the theologian and the layman. The traditional language of the church, Tillich considered, obscured the essential and relevant doctrines of the Christian message. In fact, these doctrines were so strange to modern man that there was scarcely any way available of making them intelligible. This is why Tillich searched for a new way of making religious language relevant to the modern man.

Before the Second World War, Tillich's foundations were again shaken. He left his fatherland for America and there settled down to

⁵P. Tillich, My Search for Absolutes (New York: Simon Schuster, 1967), p. 23.

⁶P. Tillich, S.F., pp. 8 and 10; see also N.B., p. 52.

⁷David Hopper, Tillich, A Theological Portrait (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1968), pp. 28, 101-126, 167-169, where a pamphlet written by Tillich in 1915 is summarized.

devote himself to at least two main tasks: to confront the Logical Positivists on their outlook on religious language and to provide a new interpretation of the Christian message for the new generation in which faith was at a minimum.

Tillich's major work, in three volumes, was named Systematic Theology. The purpose of this work was to present:

.... the method and structure of a theological system written from an apologetic point of view, and carried through in a continuous correlation with philosophy.⁸

The two works in the title of Tillich's major work, namely "systematic" and "theology" may be considered. The reason the work is called "systematic," said Tillich, is because:

First, it forced me to be consistent. Genuine consistency is one of the hardest tasks in theology.... Second,.... the systematic form became an instrument by which relations between symbols and concepts were discovered that otherwise would not have been apparent. Finally, the systematic construction has led me to conceive the object of theology in its wholeness....⁹

Tillich's enterprise has long held my esteem. But this does not mean that I agree that he has always been consistent, or that entirely satisfactory new relations between symbols and concepts have been found.

Though the work was called "theology" a continuous correlation with philosophy was maintained and thus one might wonder why it was not called "Systematic Philosophical Theology." It appears the answer is that Tillich defined the two basic needs of any theological

⁸ S.T., I., p. vii.

⁹ S.T., III., p. 3.

system as stating the truth of the Christian message and more importantly, interpreting that message or that truth for the new generation.¹⁰ A central task of theology is "to interpret (religious symbols) according to theological principles and methods"¹¹ and this will be a prime focus of this study. However, theology has "neither the duty nor the power to confirm or to negate religious symbols."¹² I would agree that Tillich has certainly given a re-interpretation of many of the religious symbols and hence I would argue that his own work may rightly be called theological.

According to Tillich, the method of correlation expresses a relation between philosophy and theology in such a way that while philosophy makes an analysis of the human situation, and may pose questions to which it is unable to produce satisfactory answers, theology suggests that answers found in the Christian message would be worthy of consideration as solutions to the philosophical questions propounded. But this rendering of the method of correlation is not quite accurate. It is certainly the province of philosophy to analyze the human situation, but it is really theology that re-formulates the questions suggested by philosophy, and it is this reformulation of the questions to which theology is prepared to offer answers. These theological answers were sometimes given in the form of a mystical/symbolic language which Tillich says "is full of dead symbols which have been killed... by a religious criticism

¹⁰S.T., I., p. 3.

¹¹S.T., I., p. 240.

¹²Ibid.

of religion."¹³

In the distant past, myths were allowed to exercise their own power upon audiences: they not only said something to the listeners, they did something. Rather than let them continue to have their experimental impact (insignificant today) some critics set about reconciling the ancient texts to modern demands. As Susan Sontag has said:

Interpretation presupposes a discrepancy between the clear meaning of a text and the demands of (later) readers. It seeks to resolve that discrepancy. The situation is that for some reason a text has become unacceptable; yet it cannot be discarded.¹⁴

Tillich saw the discrepancy and he also knew why the texts had become unacceptable, and he knew that they could not be discarded. Many of the religious symbols had lost their potency and Tillich revitalized some and discarded others. In his theological writings, he focussed his attention on the questioning of every proposition in the light of the axioms of empiricism.

Every question that a person asks, whether of the self, the world or God, presupposes some kind of participation, or as it is more usually stated presupposes some "interest." The Latin word "interesse" means, literally, to be between, to be concerned in something, to share in it. There are, however, a great many different kinds of questions and these different kinds may be classified according to the "interest" of the questioner, the one who is making the quest. The interest shown by the questioner may be just idle

¹³S.T., I., p. 240. See also S.T., I., pp. 61-62.

¹⁴Susan Sontag, Against Interpretation and Other Essays (New York: Dell, Delta Books, 1966), p. 6.

curiosity, and even when the curiosity is of a more serious type, the "something" about which we are curious, may and often has, no vital concern for us. Or we may ask questions because of a genuine desire for knowledge, and in the case of what we ordinarily term "scientific" knowledge, we attempt to investigate without participation. But even pure observation is often a very lively form of participation. It is not so much in the experimentation as in the interpretation of the findings that so-called objectivity is desirable.

The really important philosophical questions are those which concern me, as an individual human person, not just casually, or out of curiosity, but concern my very being. These questions are, to a great extent, the philosophical questions which Tillich asserts can only be answered theologically. If I ask myself about love, or death, or my present spiritual situation, even if I do not explicitly mention myself, the questions can only be addressed if I do, in fact, bring myself into the discussion. In other words, I myself am "called into question" in this type of situation. So the answer to questions of this kind necessarily contain something about myself. Since I am both the one who asks and a part of what is being asked, I must be answerable for the kind of answer given. I must identify myself with the answer, and hence my own commitment is required. If this line of argument is accepted, then we can readily see why such questions cannot be answered once for all. Unlike the question about the sum of the angles in any triangle, these vital questions seriously concern us, invoking "infinite passion." Hence they continually have to be put.

And so the restless quest goes on. Man seeks meaning, but he

does this with caution, careful not to commit himself too deeply. Every serious attachment must be at least partially resisted because it might display that which Tillich calls "heteronomy," a strange something outside man that seeks to control and dominate him. The alternative may be autonomy, man making his own decisions and finding his own values.

Tillich, however, offers as a different possibility, theonomy. Theonomy does not stand over against autonomy as heteronomy does. "Since God (theos) is the law (nomos) for both the structure and the ground of reason, they are united in him and their unity is manifest in a theonomous situation."¹⁵ The question of union of autonomy and heteronomy arises out of reason, but a complete theonomy is not possible under the conditions of existence. But this does not mean that the quest for unity, which is the quest for revelation, should be abandoned.

Man, as a moral being, must be studied in conjunction with man as a natural being. Suppose that a rational philosopher agrees with Wittgenstein that an understanding of a statement's meaning is to be gained often, but not in all cases, by an understanding of the way in which it is used. Then it is possible for that philosopher, whether or not he is a naturalist, whether or not he sympathizes with the doctrines of the less rigid form of empiricism that genuine propositions and contingent truths must be, in principle, referable to some form of checking by experience, to find an intelligible role for both moral and religious assertions.

¹⁵S.T., I., p. 85. See also P.E., pp. 44, 56-57.

Man of course, is a creature of values. Some things in life are regarded as desirable, and these have to be sought out, and when found must be encouraged and strengthened. These values we call "good." On the other hand, there are things to be avoided, and so values call for a decision. Jean Paul Sarte's insistence that man must be free to make his own decisions, unhampered by conditions and uninfluenced by tradition, is probably an expression of a feeling existent in many minds. But we are afraid to lose the "self," and this in turn makes us reluctant to commit ourselves too deeply to any cause or any faith. Since many of us need guidance, it was Tillich's contention that we must take a risk, and commit ourselves to what we feel to be our ultimate concern.

Tillich's outright rejection of supranaturalism, while this does not necessarily make him a naturalist, showed at least, that he had something in common with naturalists. "I have always felt," Tillich says, "that there might be a few who are able to register the shaking of the foundations... To those few my words are particularly directed."¹⁶ Tillich's works require a study in depth, for when we read his new interpretation of the Christian message, we must not just look at the surface, because if this is all we do, we shall only know what things seem, superficially to us. The truth which will not disappoint, is only to be found beneath the surface, and in order to reach the full depth of truth, we "have to dig through one level after another."¹⁷

¹⁶S.F., p. 9.

¹⁷S.F., p. 53.

It makes one wonder whether Tillich, like Descartes, sometimes "wears a mask." I feel that Tillich, somewhat like Descartes, does not always say all that he thinks, and often only what he thinks prudent to say.¹⁸ In man's restless quest for truth, Tillich does not expect most of his readers to reach the deepest level but each person must seek his own level, his own dimension of depth in all social, cultural and religious fields.

In an analysis of any philosophical or theological system it is necessary to acknowledge sympathy towards one's subject (the person and the content of his writings) especially as rapport is vital to both the interpretative and the evaluative processes. Feuerbach states that there are two kinds of criticism. The first is the criticism of knowledge, objectively and positively, taking into account the central ideas of the author as a measure to be used in the evaluation. The second is the criticism of misunderstanding, which, coming from without, attacks what is positively stated without being concerned with the aims or purpose of that enquiry. So where author and commentator lack communication, there can be no misunderstanding.¹⁹

My interest in the writings of Paul Tillich was further aroused by his refutation of the assertion that God was a being,

¹⁸In his "Private Thoughts" Descartes says he must "come forward in a mask," since of course Descartes knew the virtue of prudence and he did not want to share the fate of Galileo and others. See Descartes' Philosophical Writings, selection translated and edited by E. Anscombe and Peter Geach, (London: Nelson, 1959), p. 3.

¹⁹L. Feuerbach Briefwechsel ed. K. Grun (Heidelberg 1847), taken from Karl Lowith From Hegel to Nietzsche trans. David E. Green (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 73.

standing in his transcendent realm over against the world. It was exciting to find a theologian of the standing of Tillich who rejected so positively every element of supra-naturalism. I was further intrigued that while eschewing the label of materialist he appeared to espouse certain ideas which are congenial to a specific type of naturalistic philosophers.

Tillich's suggestion that the meaning of life is bound up with man's "ultimate concern" and that commitment to humanity is grounded in "Being-itself" is to me apposite to the contemporary ethos. Furthermore, the new interpretation of the Christian message given by Tillich is always mindful of the empiricists' criteria of verification and justification, which gives it particular appeal to the contemporary scientific and secular society, which accepts very little on "faith," that is, without evidence. And finally, once Tillich's special vocabulary has been mastered (and all disciplines require that their particular vocabulary be understood) his symbolic language does assist in talking about concepts in a way which otherwise would have no literal meaning.

No attempt has been made to focus on Tillich's use of dialectics, the value of soteriology or his concept of Christology, (important as these topics are) except in so far as they happen to be relevant to the immediate task in hand.

The central themes in any theology are the Supreme Being or some equivalent, and man. Thus in Chapter II Tillich's theory of man is examined. The relation of Tillich's thought to some existential philosophers is analyzed in order to probe the meaning of "existence," a pervading concept in his writings. It is possible to differentiate

specific ways in which this term is used and to relate these to the major strands of Tillich's thought.

In his attempts to interpret the truth of the Christian message to a new generation, Tillich recognizes the problems of this communication through language. In the third chapter, "Language about God" the problem of meaning in God-talk is discussed briefly and this is followed by a more extensive examination of Tillich's epistemology. Yet it is recognized that a full appreciation of his epistemology cannot be obtained unless one appreciates the power which Tillich ascribes to the symbolic mode in the field of religious thought. Accordingly the fourth chapter considers the characteristics and functions of symbols in general, while the fifth chapter analyses religious and non-religious symbols as they are used by Tillich. Any examination of symbols is incomplete unless the nature of the referent is made as explicit as possible. The difficulties which are inherent in religious symbols when Being and God are the referents are scrutinized in Chapter Six.

The relation of Tillich's thought as it has emerged to atheism, to naturalism, materialism, pantheism and monism, particularly the relation of Tillich's philosophical position to that of Spinoza, is the focus of Chapter Seven. Finally, in the postscript in Chapter Eight, I have attempted to suggest what is unique in Tillich's contribution to the philosophy of religion in this century.

CHAPTER II

TILlich'S THEORY OF MAN

The suddenness and the radical nature of the present ferment in theology are evident everywhere. Since about 1920, a number of immensely creative theologians such as Barth, Brunner, Bultmann, the Niebuhrs, and Tillich have considered this sudden change in the outlook of seekers for religious truth and attempted to relate theology to the problems of modern life. Any fitting philosophical theology for man in his present state of scientific and technological progress, must be centrally concerned with the concept of a God. A God is a Supreme Being or a properly equivalent object of latreia, of total reverence from mankind.¹ But such a theology must also be designed to offer concepts for making intelligible the relationships that the theologian holds to obtain between a God and human beings. Indeed the concept of a person will need to be discussed a good deal as well. Because this study is concerned with what Tillich calls the symbolic use of language, and because the only living creature now known to man who uses words, in whatever form or mode, is man,² it would seem appropriate briefly to consider Tillich's theory of man,

¹See J.N. Findlay. "Can God's Existence be Disproved" in New Essays in Philosophical Theology, eds. Antony Flew and A.C. MacIntyre (London: S.C.M. Press, 1955), pp. 47-56 especially pp. 52f.

²P.T. Geach, Mental Acts (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956), pp. 13, 43f. R. Puccetti Persons (London: Macmillan, 1968), Chapter I.

in so far as it is relevant to the purpose in hand.

To begin to understand Tillich's theory of man, one must try to grasp the technical uses of words like "exist," "existence," and "existent" in his philosophical theology. Following his own assertion that theology must reflect contemporary thought which is of an innovatory nature, Tillich considers many accounts of the human condition offered by existentialist philosophers, especially Martin Heidegger and Søren Kierkegaard. These accounts led him to decide that the main task of existentialism should be "an analysis of what it means to exist."³ This quotation from Tillich involves a classic use-mention or sense-reference confusion. For one may ask what the verb "to exist" means, and quite differently, one may ask what the lives of existing human beings are like. The reference may be the same, but Tillich uses the verb "to exist" in at least two quite different senses. A study of what the Evening star is leads to the conclusion that the Evening star is identical with the Morning star. But a study of the term "Evening star" leads to no such conclusion. A kind of confusion about "meaning" which frequently leads to philosophically fruitful statements is often to be found both in philosophers like Tillich, Marcel and Heidegger and in ordinary language philosophers. This is the confusion between seeking the real meaning of the word or combination of words qua asking how the word or words usually would be used and seeking the real meaning qua asking how the

³S.T., I., p. 25. Cf. Willard V.O. Quine "On What There Is" and "Reference and Modality," From a Logical Point of View (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), pp. 9 and 143-148. See also W.L. Rowe, Religious Symbols and God (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 106f.

word or words ought to be used to generate more philosophical insights.⁴

Tillich concludes that however far one proceeds in the investigation of existences an adequate understanding of the problematical fact of human existence cannot be gained from existentialist analyses, like Heidegger's Being and Time, that refer to man alone. He asserts accordingly that the most fundamental questions about man must be answered in theological terms. Such a way of reasoning in Tillich that takes one from theological questions to largely secular descriptions and analyses, then back to theology, may be partly circular. But at any rate, whether or not the circle is a vicious one, this is Tillich's way of reasoning.⁵

Like Heidegger, Tillich turns to what he takes to be the profoundly important Latin etymology of modern European words formed from existere. Reflecting on the etymology of existere, he concludes that when we do philosophical theology, we should think of man's

⁴See discussions of this confusion in John King-Farlow, "From 'God' to 'Is' and from 'Is' to 'Ought,'" Philosophical Quarterly VII (1959), 136-148, and "The Logic and Cognitive States," Mind, LXVII (1958), 247-249. Also J.R. Searle, Speech Acts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 73-76.

⁵When I express suspicions of circularity here, I mean that there is something odd about Tillich's sometimes seeming first to suggest that analysanda couched in theological language can be fully explicated by analysantia couched in purely secular language, then next seeming to suggest that the analysantia have themselves got to be explicated at least partly in terms of further analysantia involving religious language similar to that of the original analysanda. This peculiar sort of circularity must not be confused with other sorts. For example, my use of "circularity" here is not to be confused with Tillich's much publicized talk about a "theological circle" (S.T., I., pp. 8-11). See also Robert E. Chiles (ed.) "A Glossary of Tillich Terms," Theology Today, XVII (1960), 77 where he writes that the task of perfecting a Glossary of Tillich's terms is being abandoned because the "glossary is circular."

existing as man's standing out.⁶ But from what does man stand out? Tillich's answer is that man stands out from non-being. "Non-being" like "exist" has been used, of course, in various technical and pseudo-technical ways by philosophers and theologians for centuries.⁷

⁶The Late George Price told me he thought that little of philosophical value is gained from etymological derivations. It is certainly doubtful whether Tillich has made clear any new information about what it is like for a human being to exist by his purportedly etymological and highly metaphorical uses of "stand out" and "standing out." Linguistic analysis can perform a useful service in showing that "aggressive" is usually a term of commendation in North American speech but a term of criticism in British speech. No similarly clear insight seems forthcoming from Tillich's linguistic analysis of "existence" in terms of "standing out." While Tillich is often less clear a linguistic analyst than for example, J.L. Austin, I consider it important in describing how Tillich tries to present a theory about human existence to mention his belief, true or false, clear or unclear, that Tillichian linguistic analysis drawing on Heidegger and Kierkegaard is of central importance. Further, what I think is important, if perhaps confusedly and confusingly expressed by Tillich, is his belief that through such linguistic analysis we find a new and exciting way of presenting the profound philosophical truth that it is up to man to make the best possible life for himself by reflecting on his potentialities for realizing his own good and other men's good, and taking appropriate action. Thus I cannot agree that Tillich's type of linguistic analysis for all its defects lacks a crucial basis in a form of traditional philosophical wisdom. Despite Tillich's confusions he has succeeded more than many lucid analysts in getting his readers excited about this kind of wisdom. Tillich certainly seems to delight in this type of etymological quest. See, in S.T., I., for example, pp. 108, 111, 170, 188, 191 and 249. Compare many other passages in S.T., II and III.

⁷It would seem that the earliest documented discussion of Being and Non-being is to be found in the fragments of Parmenides. For Parmenides, the "way of truth" is conceived by opposing it to the "way of opinion." The way of truth is the only thinkable way and truth that employs the idea of being (what-is) is. The way of opinion is the way of appearance since it employs what can neither be expressed or thought, namely, that the idea of being is not. Parmenides started from the assumption that there is existence and that not-being is impossible. (See Fr. II l. 3 and 11. 7f). Since non-being is inconceivable, to think can only mean to think what exists. What exists is ungenerated and imperishable, homogeneous and continuous, unmovable and unchangeable, and being is the only "thing" there is. So as non-being is inconceivable, what exists cannot have any other characteristic except just Being. (Fr. VIII

So it is especially important to comprehend Tillich's own distinctive uses of "non-being," -- they are distinctive though partly rooted in the Aristotelian tradition⁸ -- if we are to see what he means when he applies the verb "exist" to "man" or "men" or "Persons" as subject terms.

"Non-being" has at least two senses for Tillich, hence he will use "existence" in at least two ways, and hence the term "non-being" is ambiguous, in that it may be, in Tillich's words, absolute or relative.⁹ To stand out from absolute non-being is to be in a state

lines 34-41).

See, for example Leonardo Taran, Parmenides (New Jersey, Princeton Univ. Press, 1965), Part II, Chapter 1, and Alexander P.D. Mourelatos The Route of Parmenides (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), Chapter 4.

The belief that being and one are convertible has been one of the dominant presuppositions of Western metaphysics. The doctrine that "to be is to be one" is to be found in Plato, (Parmenides 128 A8 - B1, Theaetatus 180D - 181B, Sophist, 242D), and also in Aristotle (Metaphysics 984 A27-B1) and it becomes a doctrine of the parallel and systematic equivocity of "being" and "one."

St. Thomas Aquinas writes, "One is convertible with being. For every being is either simple or composite. But what is simple is undivided, both actually and potentially; whereas what is composite has not being while its parts are divided, but after they make up and compose it. Hence it is manifest that the being of anything consists in indivision; and hence it is that everything guards its unity as it guards its being." (Summa Theol. I, Q11 art. 1) The Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas ed. Anton C. Pegis, (New York: Random House, 1945).

Hume writes (Treatise I, 2. 2): "'Tis evident that existence in itself belongs only to unity, and is never applicable to number, but on account of the unities of which number is composed."

⁸See Appendix I

⁹So far, I have been employing the formal mode of philosophical explication which I mention certain words that are used in Tillich's philosophically and theologically technical comment-language. When employing a formal mode, as I shall sometimes do in this dissertation, I mention his technically used words like "exist" and "non-being" in a philosophical meta-language, which is the clearest philosophical English that I can muster. Usually for sake of brevity, I

of potentiality, and even in this state, a thing is said to exist. To stand out from relative non-being is to be in a state of partial actuality, or to be in a state where some or most, but not all, of the relevant potentialities have been actualized.

How can something stand out of its own non-being? To this the answer is that everything participates in being whether or not it exists. It participates in potential being before it can come into actual being. As potential being, it is in a state of relative non-being, it is not-yet-being. But it is not nothing. Potentiality is the state of real possibility, that is, it is more than a logical possibility. Potentiality is the power of being which, metaphorically speaking, had not yet realized its power. The power of being is still latent....¹⁰

Because there is nothing at all (the Christian's nihil) in the state of absolute non-being it is clear that a being cannot be in a state of absolute non-being. The questions "Why is there something? Why is there not nothing?" were questions posed as philosophically

shall move from a formal mode of explication to a material mode of philosophical exposition which will involve me in using much of Tillich's own terminology. For example, instead of saying that Tillich sometimes qualifies the technical term "non-being" with the technical adjective "absolute" and sometimes with "relative," I shall say that (for Tillich) non-being may be absolute or relative. When I suspect that the exposition in a material mode is becoming too unclear, I shall retreat again temporarily to a formal mode for clarifying what Tillich or I may be trying to say about the cluster of difficult concepts that characterize his philosophical theology. See Rudolf Carnap, Logical Syntax of Language (New Jersey: Paterson Littlefield, Adams and Co., 1957), pp. 287ff. Cf. A. Tarski, "Semantic Conception of Truth" and G. Frege "On Sense and Reference" in Readings in Philosophical Analysis ed. H. Feigl and W. Sellars (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1949), pp. 52-84; 85-102.

¹⁰S.T., II., p. 20.

central for Tillich by Martin Heidegger (among other philosophers).¹¹ If there were nothing, nothing at all, with no possibility of anything's ever existing or having existed, then I presume that this would be what Tillich means by a state of absolute non-being. But if there is anything, it must have being, and if the kind of being is potential being or essential being, then this state, I believe, is what Tillich means by standing out from absolute non-being. If, however, that being has actualized itself, then it is what Tillich speaks of as standing out from relative non-being.

In the quotation just cited, Tillich has used two very misleading phrases. In the first of these, he writes that "everything participates in being, whether it exists or not." Now, according to his own definition, everything which has being exists in one of two senses. Either it exists in the potential or essential state, or it exists in the actual state. It would appear that Tillich here means that "everything participates in being, whether it actually exists or not." If not, then it exists potentially. There is no other possibility, excepting Being-itself.

The second misleading phrase contains the same type of possible confusion. To say, "it is not yet being" contradicts his own

¹¹S.T., I., p. 163. Also M. Heidegger Introduction to Metaphysics (New York: Doubleday Books, 1961), pp. 23f. Sidney Hook, The Quest of Being (New York: Delta Books, 1953), p. 141 suggests that these questions are "devoid of meaning, except as a sign of emotional anxiety." Yoshinori Takouchi "Buddhism and Existentialism" in Religion and Culture ed. Walter Leibracht, (London: S.C.M. Press, 1959), says: "From the religious point of view, the formulation of the problem should rather be the converse: "Why is there any nothing? Why not rather being?" Hence Heidegger's effort to interpret this problem once again," in, for example M. Heidegger, op. cit., Chapter I.

presupposition, for everything has being, even God. Otherwise, it is nothing. Tillich surely means, "as potential being..., it is not yet in an actual state of existence."

To stand out from relative non-being is to be in a state of partial actuality, that is, some of the potentialities have been instantiated. Tillich instances a case taken from nature:

Within the whole of being as it is encountered, there are structures which have no existence and things which have existence on the basis of structures. Treehood does not exist, although it has being, namely potential being. But the tree in my backyard does exist. But it stands out and exists only because it participates in that power of being which is treehood, that power which makes every tree a tree and nothing else.¹²

But not all universals can be instantiated by the actualization of seemingly appropriate potentialities. Such 'pure' geometrical forms as ideal Euclidean triangles whose boundary lines have no thickness cannot be instantiated by a relevant actualization. Those human potentialities which do become actualized become subject to the condition of human existence. The dominating feature of this condition is what Tillich calls estrangement. Theologically speaking, - or perhaps one should say post-theologically speaking - it is the dominating feature.¹³

To speak, then, of an individual as existing, is to speak of the individual in one of at least two ways. Either (a) one speaks of a something as standing out from absolute non-being, as having potentialities that may in principle, be actualized, or (b) one

¹²S.T., II., p. 21 (cf. S.T., III., p. 12).

¹³S.T., II., p. 44.

speaks of the individual as standing out from relative non-being, as having some of the relevant potentialities actualized. To speak in the first way of man as existing is to speak of man in his essential state, his pre-Fall state.¹⁴ To speak in the second way of man as existing is to speak of man in his actual state. Tillich himself states that existence is used with different meanings:

It can mean the possibility of finding a thing within the whole of being; it can mean the actuality of what is potential in the realm of essences; it can mean the 'fallen world' and it can mean a type of thinking which is aware of its existential conditions of which rejects essence entirely.¹⁵

It appears obvious that the "fallen world" is that world which "came into being" or existence as indicated in the myth of the Fall of Adam. This is our world, and the human individuals who populate it are, of course, in existence within it.

Corresponding to ways (a) and (b) of speaking about existence, I shall use terms like "standing out₁" and "standing out₂," "stands out₁" and "stands out₂," "existing₁" and "existing₂," "existence₁" and "existence₂," and so on with relevant words and their inflexions.

Tillich appears to place a high value on the process of actualizing one's potentialities. His explanation of the way in which this transition takes place will be discussed later in this chapter. This process has, as a pre-requisite, a succession of standings out₂ from what man is essentially. For a man to go through a series of standings out₂ is for a man to develop his potentialities. Standing out₁ from absolute non-being is a form of existence,

¹⁴See Appendix 2.

¹⁵S.T., I., p. 203.

distinguishable from standing out₂ from relative non-being. Existence₁ differs considerably from existence₂. Man in his essential state, that is, in his potential state, is for Tillich a mode of existence and we have called it existence₁. Existence₂ is human existence in which some of the potentialities have been actualized and some have not. The actualizations of some of the potentialities present in the state of existence₁ are what give character or personality to particular human standings out₂. In his essential state any person, qua man, has stood out₁ from absolute non-being but qua imperfect or potential man, a person has not yet achieved (vastly) many important standings out₂ from relative non-being. I hope I am right, moreover, to interpret Tillich as meaning that a man even qua a living animal meeting descriptions like "biped," "social," etc., that do not require the application of predicates like "free" and "partly rational" stands out₂ from relative non-being. It is the instantiation of some of the essences of a man qua free and partially rational being that makes a person's development a distinctively human or personal standing out₂ from relative non-being.

Tillich calls the state of essential being from which a being passes into existence₂, the state of dreaming innocence. In myth, this stage of existence, existence₁, has been projected into the past, into pre-history or into the golden age. This essential state (existence₁) is not an actual stage of human development which can be known directly or indirectly. "In psychological terms, one can interpret this stage as that of dreaming innocence,"¹⁶ and the term

¹⁶S.T., II., p. 33.

is used by Tillich to indicate something which "precedes" actual existence (existence₂), for "it has potentiality, not actuality." Tillich justifies the use of this metaphor by an analysis of each of the words involved in the phrase.

Dreaming, he asserts, is a state of mind which is real and non-real at the same time -- just as is potentiality. Dreaming anticipates the actual just as everything actual is somehow present in the potential.¹⁷ This sort of talk, it appears, is not to be pressed too literally as offering the historical description of some actualized state of human development. The metaphor of dreaming, though its application seems not entirely clear, is intended to suggest a state of pure potentiality, rather as the sentence "the Sleeping Beauty is still dreaming" suggests that this person cannot actualize her most valuable important potentialities until she wakes up. Tillich might say that such talk of the human dreaming state has no temporal reference to actuality. But the state is rather like a dream about a dreaming Sleeping Beauty which contains the actual, the temporal and the real in anticipation and hopefulness. Perhaps by emphasizing a distinction between man's non-distinctively standing out₂ as mere animal and his distinctively standing out₂ as a person, the metaphor could be made clearer.

¹⁷ S.T., II., p. 33. Aristotle, in De Anima II, 1, 412a-16-27, 412b25-413a3, contrasts the different potentialities of the sleeping and waking state. He argues that, though the former is potential compared to the latter, it presupposes the actualizing of the potentiality to live. Cf. Appendix I on parallels in Tillich's and in Aristotle's writings.

For Tillich, the term "innocence," pointing to non-actualized potentiality, has three connotations, all involving some reference to a lack: a lack of actual experience, a lack of personal responsibility, and a lack of moral guilt. Tillich requires us to synthesize all three connotations, metaphorically, of course, and specifically refers to a child's original innocence through ignorance of his sexual potentialities. This "innocence" or almost pre-adult ignorance is gradually replaced by experience, responsibility and guilt, when the state of "dreaming innocence" is lost.¹⁸

The term finitude, by Tillich's definition, refers to what he would describe by the words "the unity of being and non-being," to the conjunction of what-can-be-actualized-and-is-actual, with what-could-be-actualized-but-is-not-actual. In other words, states of both actuality and potentiality are conjoined in finitude or limitation. The actualization of all human potentialities, Tillich affirms, never proceeds to completion.

A standing out₂ from something involves a standing in something, for it is only possible to stand out₂ from something if one has previously stood in something. So when actualization occurs, the entity not only stands out₂ from something but remains partially in a relevant range of unactualized potentialities. To illustrate this, Tillich instances the case of the man considered an outstanding man, who is one who is said in ordinary language to stand out from the mediocre or average. Such a man still remains a person standing in

¹⁸S.T., II., pp. 33-34.

something as a member of the human family.¹⁹ Tillich also thinks of treehood as existing₁ but not as existing₂ - not existing in the ordinary language sense of "existing" because it has only potential being. Trees do exist₂, standing out₂ from the sheer potentiality of treehood, yet still participating in (or standing in) that sort of being, designated by the term "treehood."²⁰

This cluster of remarks is, I think, illuminating, but it can easily become productive of confusions. For instance, a 249 branched cocoanut tree can be, or is, actualized once such a particular tree exists₂. But a 249-branched-cocoanut-treehood is actualized only when such a particular tree exists₂ and not when treehood exists. Tillich, it seems, is opposed to existent₂ universals. Again, lovingness is "actualized" when an already existent₂ being (paradigmatically, a person) becomes loving - that is, begins to exhibit this property. No entity need be thereby actualized when lovingness as opposed to treehood is "actualized."

The words "essence" and "potentiality" are not synonymous. For we have already seen that while all genuine potentialities are, in principle, actualizable, some essences can be realized by individuals that exist, and some can not. For Tillich it would seem that, in the case of man, essence and potentiality could be regarded as coinciding without causing confusion. Tillich appears to hold this view when he writes with man in mind:

¹⁹S.T., II., p. 20.

²⁰S.T., II., p. 21.

Existing can mean standing out from absolute non-being, while remaining in it; it can mean finitude, the unity of being and non-being. And existing can mean standing out from relative non-being, while remaining in it; it can mean actuality, the unity of actual being and resistance against it. But whether we use the one or the other meaning of non-being, existence means standing out of non-being.²¹

All beings, including man, are finite. For this reason Tillich speaks of them all as limited and threatened by non-being. The basic question of finitude arises from the situation of the finite being. Because the finite being lacks and must lack what Tillich speaks of as the power of Being-itself, (the power of God), it is said by Tillich to be threatened by non-being. This threat may take the form of approaching an inevitable death; it may take the form of the unwanted and disquieting limitations imposed by the world upon the self. Or it may take the form of existential awareness of the gulf between what we should be and what we, in fact, are, that is to say, between our relatively superior essential being and our relatively inferior existential₂ being. In this situation a finite personal being refusing to betray its distinctive humanity can do nothing but affirm itself, directing itself to actualizing potentialities for fresh realization of human dignity. It must affirm itself "in-spite-of, that is, in spite of that which tends to prevent the self from affirming itself."²² If a (finite) human being does not succumb to despair or self-destruction when aware of these

²¹S.T., II., p. 21.

²²C.B., p. 32. Tillich's famous title and slogan The Courage To Be reveals that Tillich often treats the verb "to be," from a semantic standpoint, as an Activity Verb, and not just as a syntactically Active Verb.

threats of non-being, but continues to be (to seek the actualization of authentically human potentialities) he confirms that what Tillich would call the affirmation of the courage to be has taken place and will continue. It is therefore pertinent to enquire where the basis of such a courage is to be found. The answer, according to Tillich, is to be found in the power of being. This is an answer which raises many questions about the many concepts of God, about what theological or post-theological concepts can be acceptable to modern man in this scientific age, yet also fulfil his religious aspirations and the like.

For Tillich, the problem of finitude in man is unintelligible unless we can grasp the dialectical concept of non-being. The non-dialectical concept of being is that of ouk on, the absolute nothingness referred to by "nihil" in the phrase creatio ex nihilo.²³ What is absolutely a nothing, Tillich would say, has no relation whatever to being. It is pure negation; hence Tillich calls the concept non-dialectical. On the other hand, Tillich uses the Greek words me on, to express his dialectical concept of non-being.²⁴ To me on is related to being in the sense of a perversion of or resistance to or menace to being, to what has suitable actuality and potentialities. Being is threatened by what falls under the concept of me on. The

²³ S.T., I., p. 188.

²⁴ S.T., I., p. 179. Dynamics is "the potentiality of being, which is non-being in contrast to things that have a form, and the power of being in contrast to pure non-being." Dynamics expresses what the Greeks called me on, or the potentiality of being. Non-being is me on. It is that which does not yet have being, but which can become being. This is opposed to ouk on, by which the Greeks meant that kind of nothing which has no relation to being: it is the absolute negation of being. All being, potential or actual, essential or existential, stands out of absolute non-being (ouk on).

problem of finitude is, therefore, said to be the dialectical problem of non-being. For:

... being limited by non-being, is finitude. Non-being appears as the 'not yet' of being and as the 'no more' of being.²⁵

Tillich considers that it is wrong, ontologically as well as logically, to place being and nothingness in absolute contrast.

"There can be no world unless there is a dialectical participation of non-being and being."²⁶ Christianity talked of creation as an arising of actual things from ouk on (non-dialectical nothing) rather than from me on (dialectical nothing). Three points are raised by this concept of dialectical non-being which Tillich says must be faced by theologians. He puts these forward as the doctrine of sin, of man's creatureliness, and of God. The doctrine of sin, as Tillich considers it, will be discussed later in this chapter.²⁷

Man's creatureliness is seen from the standpoint of his origin and return, for he was created out of nothing and to nothing he must return. This is why the Arian doctrine of the Logos as the highest of all creatures and the Platonic doctrine of natural immortality could not be accepted by Christian theology.

God is called by Tillich a living God, who is the ground of all living beings. But living things often instance evil and sin. So Tillich asks: "If there is no negative principle in addition to him which could account for evil and sin, how can we avoid positing

²⁵S.T., I., p. 189.

²⁶S.T., I., p. 187.

²⁷See pp. 45-47.

a dialectically negativity in God himself?"²⁸

This concept of dialectical non-being provides Tillich with requirements for a metaphorical description of being. "Being," he writes, "is the power of being," presupposing that there is something over which it may prove this power. And "that which is conquered by the power of being is non-being."²⁹ It is, metaphorically speaking, "that quality of being by which everything that participates in being is negated. Non-being is the negation of being within being itself."³⁰ Being which contains non-being is what is meant by "finite being."

However, finitude as such, is not a mark of estrangement of existence₂. It belongs to the essential nature of being to existence₁; thus existing₁ man is essentially subject to threat, but not necessarily overcome by threat.

Finitude is the possibility of losing one's ontological structure, and with it, one's self. But this is a possibility, not a necessity. To be finite is to be threatened. But the threat is possibility not actuality.³⁰

Having considered finitude in its aspect of both existence₁ and existence₂ it is pertinent to ask, How does this process of actualizing some of one's potentialities occur? Man, in his essential nature, in his "dreaming innocence" has a relation of "sonship" to God. "Sonship" in biblical language means the very intimate

²⁸ S.T., I., p. 189.

²⁹ L.P.J., p. 37.

³⁰ L.P.J., p. 38, cf. C.B., p. 34.

relationship between father and son.³² Why, then, does he leave this apparently favourable position?

Tillich's metaphorical and analogical account of the stage which he terms "dreaming innocence" shows of course, some crucial differences from the mythical account given in Genesis. Before the latter Fall, life in the Garden of Eden was a life of perfection and sinlessness. The state of "dreaming innocence" is neither one of perfection nor one of sinlessness,³³ but a state of temptation. This state of temptation is due to the fact that dreaming innocence is always "driving beyond itself," driving to influence an existent₁ to make the transition from existence₁ to existence₂.³⁴

The state of temptation, the urge to leave existence₁ appears to be due to at least two forces. One of these is referred to by Tillich as finite freedom, a force which influences an existent₁ to make a completely free choice for or against actuality. The other force, called by the peculiar term, expectation, refers to a state of tension between the polar units, being and non-being, which seems to be aroused when finite freedom makes the choice in favour of

³² S.T., II., p. 109; cf. the symbol "Son of Man."

³³ S.T., II., p. 34.

³⁴ An interesting notion is expressed by Jasper Hopkins. He writes: "At first glance, one is impressed by how much Sartre's account of Genet's 'falling from grace' resembles Tillich's account of 'falling from dreaming innocence.' So, then, if Tillich's existential-psychological analysis can validly interpret the biblical notion of the Fall, it might seem that Sartre's analysis can be put to the same theological use. But a second look suggests otherwise, for Sartre introduces the highly problematical concept of ontological guilt." See Jasper Hopkins, "Theological Language and the Nature of Man in Jean-Paul Sartre's Philosophy," Harvard Theological Review LXI (1968), 36.

actualization.

Freedom is one of the polar units of the ontological pair of elements, freedom and destiny.³⁵ The concept of freedom is of prime importance in Tillich's writings where it is associated not only with destiny, but with self-transcendence,³⁶ and self-relatedness.³⁷ Before the transition from existence₁ to existence₂ takes place, the ontological pair of elements, freedom and destiny, are in complete harmony, for neither of them are actualized. But, for some reason

³⁵The other pairs of ontological elements are individuality and participation, and dynamics and form. For Tillich's meaning and use of Polarity, see Appendix 3.

³⁶What is concrete is, for Tillich, finite. The concrete in reality may be termed its non-transcendence. But reality is not totally contained within the bounds of the concrete, finite empirical and contingent frame. The concrete reality which is actualized in the self-integration and the self-creativity of life is empirically observable, and finite. (S.T., III., p. 87). However, if a former stage life process is "transcended" by a later stage, this "self-transcendence" still remains within the limits of finite life. One finite situation is transcended by another (S.T., III., p. 31). But every human spirit drives toward the unconditional in the direction of self-transcendence. "He who is not able to perceive something infinitely significant, is not a man" (N.B., p. 121). Tillich reserves the term self-transcendence in its strictest sense for that "vertical function" "in which life drives beyond itself as finite life. It is self-transcendence because life is not transcended by something which is not life. Life, by its very nature as life, is both in itself and above itself, and this situation is manifest in the function of self-transcendence." This property of self-transcendence seems to bear a close affinity with "ecstasy" since that term appears to mean, for Tillich, one's being "above" or standing outside one's self. (S.T., I., p. 111).

³⁷In the polarity of being, there are the two poles of self-relatedness and belongingness. The self-relatedness of being is its power of being something for itself, a quality which Tillich later called the "centredness" of being, (S.T., III, pp. 30-32) while there must also be a "belongingness" of being, that is, the character of being as a part of the universe of being. These two qualities are ever present in all existents, potentially or actually, but they are not highest generic characteristics for they do not differentiate between the centered and the belonging kind of being. (S.T., I., p. 165).

not explained, the pole denoted by "freedom" becomes active, setting up a tension between the pole of freedom and the pole of destiny. This moment is referred to by Tillich as aroused freedom, and it is at this juncture that the transition is made and man becomes actual. Man is now free. He is free in that he has the power (the potentiality) of contradicting himself, that is, he is free from his own freedom, for at any point, he may surrender his humanity. He is free upon decision, from the power of his essential nature, though he cannot surrender it. "Man is man because he has freedom...."³⁸ It extends even to the freedom to turn away from the creative ground of his being. The fall of man is a testimony to his greatness for his fall is rooted in his freedom.³⁹ That his freedom is, nevertheless, finite means that he cannot utterly separate himself from his Ground. This would be to choose non-being₁, that is, to allow freedom to legislate itself into non-being₁ - an impossibility at the ontological level. In other words, man does not have the freedom not to be. Man does not have the freedom, that is, not to be in any sense of "be." In some sense or other, he must be.⁴⁰

The possibility of turning away from the creative Ground of his being and of becoming estranged is just the course of action which existing₂ man has chosen. His decision to emerge in his actual

³⁸ S.T., I., p. 182.

³⁹ S.T., II., pp. 32f.

⁴⁰ It is true that man may choose not to be in existence₂ or in actuality through suicide. Such a choice cannot, however, free him from being essential. At the essential level he must be, in the (to Tillich) important sense that he must exist.₁

situation is at once an act of his freedom and the constitution of his problems. He is estranged, a fact which becomes the central concept in Tillich's analysis of man's actual life.⁴¹

The second force involved in the transition from existence₁ to existence₂ Tillich calls expectation.⁴² This term is used by Tillich on very few occasions; in fact in the short space of but a few pages, the term "expectation" has been replaced by the word "anxiety." There must be a reason for this substitution since Tillich does not change words for changing's sake.

Before the entrance of man into a state of existence₂, existent₁ man is urged to leave his state of "dreaming innocence" by the

⁴¹Tillich seems to hope that his approach to freedom largely bypasses the traditional debates between determinists and indeterminists, for Tillich appears to feel no need to relate his doctrines about human freedom to their debates at any serious length. "Freedom" is sometimes taken, by Libertarians, to mean the absence of a complete set of determining causes. In this sense, a person is free if his choice of action is not fully determined before he makes a conscious decision. The determinists argue that no such indeterminacy exists. Tillich does not use the word "freedom" in this way. For him, the word "freedom" suggests a mode of being, for it is one of the poles of one of the ontological elements. The mode of being suggested by the word "freedom" as used by Tillich, is independence, separateness, autonomy and individuality. Free acts are caused by a self, Tillich holds, not by some external cause. For he is primarily interested in the structure of self-hood, not in causation of behaviour as it is studied by so many in the social sciences. But although Tillich hopes to have bypassed these debates philosophically, he may have done so only terminologically. For his ways of talking about "persons," "man," "self," "individuality," "courage to be" only seem to make sense in a Libertarian conceptual scheme.

⁴²S.T., I., p. 187.

drive called "expectation." It is almost certain (though not necessarily so) that man will launch himself into the new status of existence₂. The connotations of this word "expectation" make it a very apt word under the circumstances. The word "expectation" usually implies a high degree of certainty, while it also connotes the idea of anticipation and the idea of apprehension; to anticipate what one will find or what one will feel in the new situation, and yet to apprehend (meaning, according to the dictionary, to anticipate with anxiety) the sensations which will occur. The verb "to expect" has a kind of "neutral" application in that we may expect something whether that something is esteemed favourably or unfavourably, or, of course, what we expect may never happen at all. In one sense "expect" has a close relation to "belief" as when I say "I expect X" I mean "I believe that X will occur."

Tillich's technical use of the word "expectation" refers to the tension which develops in existent man in the poles of the ontological element "freedom and destiny." When the drive towards finite freedom has been effected, Tillich uses the word "anxiety." "Anxiety" (in one of its many senses) like "expectation" implies a kind of neutrality in that one may be anxious about nothing, or about something, but we know not what.⁴³ But it is quite interesting to note that

⁴³ See Anthony Kenny, *Action, Emotion and Will* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 189. "Anything which can be xed is a material object of x-ing. Beer, for example can be seen, and so beer is a material object of seeing; when the executioners burnt Joan of Arc, Joan was the material object of their burning. The formal object of x-ing is the object under that description which must apply to it if it is to be possible to 'x' it. If only what is P can be x-ed, then "thing which is P" gives the formal object of x-ing." See also L. Wittgenstein, The Blue Book in The Blue and Brown Books

when Tillich uses the verb "to be anxious about," it loses its neutrality and takes on a formal object. The something, now the formal object, is the threat of non-being to one's existence. And, for Tillich, this threat of non-being becomes increasingly important in his mind and so the word "anxiety" is certainly a more fitting word than "expectation."⁴⁴ So now Tillich's use of "anxiety" implies the threat of the sense of imminent danger, perhaps of evil or punishment, in which the word "anxious" has lost its neutral implication. The threat of non-being is painfully immanent.⁴⁵

But a difficulty arises in his use of the word "expectation" in the following quotation: "Thus disappointed, expectation creates

(Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), pp. 20-21. On p. 21 he writes: "These cases of expectation form a family; they have family likenesses which are not clearly defined. There is a totally different use of the word "expectation" if we use it to mean a particular sensation. This use of the words like "wish," "expectation," etc., readily suggests itself. There is an obvious connection between this use and the one described above. There is no doubt that in many cases if we expect someone, in the first sense, some, or all, of the activities described are accompanied by a peculiar feeling, a tension; and it is natural to use the word "expectation" to mean this experience of tension" (My italics).

⁴⁴ It is worthy of note that the neutrality of the verb "to expect" is appropriate when ontological, rather than evaluative, categories are under discussion, as they are at this point. In S.T., I., "expectation" appears only on p. 187. "Anxiety" (after his use of the word "expectation") occurs on page 191. Neither word appears on the intervening pages.

⁴⁵ See A. Kenny, op. cit., p. 63. "Though one can experience an emotion only if one can manifest it, it does not follow that one does experience an emotion only if one does manifest it." Freud seems to prefer to think of Angst as being afraid of something but we do not know what it is (Collected Works XVIII, p. 12). On the relationship between the two formulations see L. Wittgenstein, Blue Book, pp. 22ff. "Angst" is often used to refer to cases of a different type, where the subject does assign an object to his fears, but an inadequate one, which a psychoanalyst regards as a symbol for some other, hidden object. See Appendix 4.

the distinction between being and non-being."⁴⁶ The difficulty arises in trying to understand the word "creates" in the quotation. The distinction between being and non-being can hardly be created by EXPECTATION: it is there as a universal fact. Hook seems to have difficulty too, in understanding this passage. He writes:

Expectation, however, is an attitude possible only to man. Where there is no man, there is no expectation, and therefore no non-being. Expectation, and therefore non-being, are purely psychological categories. We should therefore expect Tillich to admit that he is not dealing with a substantial force or power when he refers to "non-being," but with a capacity limited to one species in a "sea of being." Instead, he forgets that he has just told us that human expectation has "created" non-being and maintains that man "participates not only in being but in non-being." But one cannot participate in a distinction which one creates unless one, of course, is everywhere, unless one's self with one's power of expectation is always present everywhere. And this is the implication of Tillich's further statement that "there can be no world unless there is a dialectical participation of non-being in being."⁴⁷

Two suggestions may tentatively be offered here. Perhaps Tillich meant that "expectation was created by the distinction between being and non-being," but I feel that this suggestion would hardly be acceptable. On the other hand, it might be suggested that expectation creates an awareness of the distinction between being and non-being just at the moment when aroused freedom is making itself felt in the transitional stage. So both "expectation" and "anxiety" refer to the awareness of the threat of non-being. But I do not wish to imply here that anxiety refers only to the awareness since anxiety implies both a certain ontological state of affairs and

⁴⁶ S.T., I., p. 187.

⁴⁷ Sidney Hook, "The Quest for Being" in The Quest for Being (New York: Delta Books, 1953), p. 148.

man's awareness of it. The actual state of affairs is necessary but not sufficient for ontological anxiety; necessary because one could be anxious about something or nothing, and Tillich's use of the word requires that we are anxious about something. This is, however, not sufficient because this state of affairs would not cause anxiety unless man was, in some way, aware of it. So the necessary and sufficient condition for anxiety is the conjunction of the actual state of affairs and the awareness of that state.

Anxiety is ontological, or "in the nature of things." It is a universal fact.⁴⁸ It must not be confused with the ontic manifestation which is fear and which is psychological and not ontological.⁴⁹ Heidegger explained quite clearly the distinction which has to be observed when using the contrasted words "ontic" and "ontological." In his description of man (Dasein), he speaks of Sorge (care) as the general character of existence, and of Angst (anxiety) as the relation of man to nothingness, or of fear of death, conscience, guilt, despair in daily life, loneliness etc. But Heidegger insists

⁴⁸ S.T., I., p. 192.

⁴⁹ "By 'dread' (Angst) we do not mean 'anxiety' (Aengstlichkeit), which is common enough and is akin to nervousness (Furchtsamkeit), a mood that comes over us only too easily. Dread differs absolutely from fear (Furcht). We are always afraid of this or that definite thing, which threatens us in this or that definite way. 'Fear of' is generally 'fear about' something." M. Heidegger, Existence and Being (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1949), p. 335. See also S. Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, Sickness unto Death and The Concept of Dread (New York: Doubleday-Anchor Books, 1954), e.g. pp. 38f, 139, and 142. Kierkegaard's description of anxiety is the "fear of nothingness." Consult also Rollo May, The Meaning of Anxiety (New York: The Ronald Press, 1950), esp. pp. 29-45. See also Kenneth Hamilton, "Life in the House that Angst Built," Hibbert Journal, LVII (No. 1, Oct. 1958).

repeatedly that these characteristics are not "ontic" describing merely a particular being Man; "but are rather 'ontological' describing the very structure of Being-itself."⁵⁰ Henceforth when I use "ontological," "ontic" etc., according to Heidegger's recommended usage, I shall write "h-ontological," "h-ontic" etc. Tillich himself has been greatly influenced by the h-ontological approach, for whereas his earlier works seem to stress the Kairos⁵¹ and the tenets of Religious Socialism, his later philosophical theology is set in an h-ontological frame of reference. In the Systematic Theology, one is confronted with Tillich's h-ontological concern for divisions and apparent contradictions in man's experience of reality, and with the important proposition that God is Being-itself.

In his freedom, man chooses to actualize himself and thus becomes estranged from God. To say that man can and does make such a choice is not to say that he can separate himself completely from the ground of being. For this would mean, (if we can talk of meaning something per impossibile) to choose total non-being, an ending of existence simpliciter, not just of existence₂. For all his freedom, man cannot decide to choose total non-being for this is an impossibility at the h-ontological level. Man may choose through h-ontic self-destruction not to be in actuality but such a choice cannot destroy his essential being, his existence₁.

⁵⁰T.C. p. 95.

⁵¹See Appendix 5. For a further review of the literature on anxiety see Herbert Fingarette, The Self in Transformation (New York: Basic Books, 1963), Chapter 2 in which he deals with Tillich (pp. 92-95), Freud (71-73), Jung (90), Horney (89), Kubie (73), Meltzer (85-6), and a number of others.

The concept of estrangement is the focal concept in Tillich's analysis of man's life. At the essential level of being, the polarity of non-being and being is an ingredient, and hence h-ontological anxiety is in some sense present also. It must not be thought that at this level, anxiety is ineffective, for it is said by Tillich to be "one of the driving forces" which causes the change from the essential (existence₁) level to the existential (existence₂) level. In conjunction with freedom, anxiety produces in man a state of awareness of loss, because now he begins to realize that so much of his potentiality is not actualized. This is Tillich's way of explaining the original state of temptation and this growth of freedom, this ascent to free decisions for the actualization of man's potentialities is the fall from essence (existence₁) to existence₂. Man decides to realize himself concretely, though the realization is never complete. The appearance of actual man constitutes, in some sense, creation. Tillich asserts (A) that:

Creation, and the Fall coincide in so far as there is no point in time and space in which created goodness was actualized and had existence.⁵²

"Existence" is, of course, existence₂, and the phrase "created goodness" refers to the essential state, existence₁.

His asserting (A) would seem to imply that there is an a priori connection between being a fully personalized human animal

⁵² S.T., II., p. 44. (My italics)

and being in a fallen or estranged state.⁵³ In other words, the coincidence of being a person and of being fallen or estranged is not a contingent matter. He asserts that there are no historical periods in the life of essential man or any individual man at which the conceptually interlocking characteristics of fallenness and personality are about to become instantiated through the actualization of certain distinctively human potentialities. It is important to notice the parallelism between existence₁ and existence₂. Following the appearance of man in his state of existence₂, all his experiences are in the temporal-spatial framework. But before that, in his essential state, it would make no sense to talk of using a stop watch in order to pinpoint some "time slice" or "spatio-temporal chunk," at which what has been a pre-personal human animal has instantaneously become a free rational person consciously and deliberately striving towards very definite goals. It therefore seems that, since no such "time-slice" exists, it cannot be a matter of contingent fact that an existent₂ is estranged. If this cannot be a matter of contingent fact, then it seems it must be a matter of a priori fact.

I think, however, this line of argument is faulty. Consider the case of a normal pre-personal human child. Such a being gradually becomes a full person because gradually his strivings become conscious

⁵³"Those concepts are a priori which are presupposed in every actual experience, since they constitute the very structure of experience itself. The conditions of experience are a priori." (S.T., I., p. 166). J. Heywood Thomas asserts that "these statements concerning man are not generalizations from empirical observations but are a priori truths like Kant's doctrine of the Categories as the a priori forms of the understanding." J. Heywood Thomas, Paul Tillich: An Appraisal (London: S.C.M. Press, 1963), p. 112.

and deliberate exercises of freedom in pursuit of very definite goals. There is no specific historical moment at which personalization takes place but there are historical periods of personalization. Tillich, however, has in mind by his remarks⁵⁴ about the "transhistorical" quality of the transition from essence (existence₁) to existence₂ a rather different point. He is not saying that the process takes place in time though not at a point of time. He is denying it takes place in time at all.

Now this may seem to strengthen the case for saying that the connexion between being a fully personalized human animal and being in a fallen or estranged state is a priori, for many philosophers hold a priori connexions to be timeless connexions. But Tillich's purpose at least, whether or not in the end he carries his program through coherently and successfully, is to deny the Fall a necessary place in the structure of being, and thus avoid being committed to the ontological ultimacy of Evil:

Creation is good in its essential character.... The leap from essence to existence is the original fact....it has the character of a leap and not of structural necessity. In spite of its tragic universality, existence cannot be derived from essence.⁵⁵

Tillich does not therefore hold such a connexion to exist by a priori necessity, if by this is meant ontological necessity. However, the sense of "a priori" used in the passage quoted as footnote 53 does not seem to be this sense. Such a priori truths are truths about the general character of existence, and are not therefore ontological.

⁵⁴ S.T., II., p. 40.

⁵⁵ S.T., II., p. 44.

They are a priori in the sense that they are not discovered by empirical observation of actual existents₂.

In sum, then, the distinction between existence₁ and existence₂ is fundamental to Tillich's theory of man. It is a basic feature of the latter that existence₂ involves the actualization (to greater or lesser degrees) by individual men of their potentialities to be persons. What is transhistorical (and therefore is that of which there are no historical periods) is a condition of existence₁. That is to say, man's "standing out" from absolute non-being is not something which takes place in history, and no historical process is intended.

Tillich is, of course, considering his own interpretation (a non-historical interpretation) of the Fall depicted in the Book of Genesis. Like so many opponents of rigid fundamentalism who are impressed by scientific theories such as that of Evolution, Tillich asserts that the Genesis account of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is not literally acceptable as a true historical account of the first two human beings (created ex nihilo shortly after other animals were created ex nihilo).⁵⁶ It is not acceptable as a factual report to the effect that these two humans were the original parents of all other humans who have lived since about 4004 B.C.; that Adam and Eve lived in a particular place on this planet called Eden; that because Eve let herself be misguided by a talking snake etc., all her descendants have for that reason been in a spiritually feeble "fallen" state, etc.

⁵⁶The validity of Tillich's interpretation of the phrase creatio ex nihilo is bound up with his conception of finitude. Cf. J. Heywood Thomas op. cit., p. 119.

The error with which Tillich is concerned is the acceptance of the Genesis story as an historical process: "'Adam before the Fall'... are states of potentiality. They are not actual states."⁵⁷ Niebuhr tells us that in the privately circulated Propositions Tillich wrote:

The myth of the 'transcendent fall' describes the transition (from essence to existence) as a universal event in ontological terms. The myth of the 'immanent fall' describes the transition as an individual event in psychological terms.⁵⁸

Niebuhr continues: "There is no myth of the 'transcendent fall' in the Bible, but only the myth of a historical fall." In short, the error Tillich is concerned with is not that of describing an historical process in theological (as opposed to scientific) terms, but the error of thinking that what the theological terms described was an historical process, and this is quite a difference of emphasis.

It is noteworthy that Tillich continues to use the word "transition" in phrases such as "transition from essence to existence" and "transition involved in the Fall and Creation." The word "transition" means "a passing or passage from one condition, action or (rarely) place, to another," or "the passage from an earlier to a later stage of development or formation." The definitions from The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary contain a very strong connotation of the passage of time. But Tillich clearly points out that there is no time process involved in the "transition" from essence to existence. If, on the other hand, Tillich had tried to avoid this kind

⁵⁷ S.T., II., p. 40.

⁵⁸ R. Niebuhr, "Biblical Thought and Ontological Speculation" T.P.T., p. 220; see also S.T., II., p. 38.

of spatio-temporal language, it seems he would have had to fall back on something like a sudden creation of man in his estranged state. But this would be accepting something very close to the creation myth, and the great difficulty with which he would have been faced is the problem of evil. This kind of explanation would make God responsible for the creation of evil, and this Tillich would wish to avoid. So Tillich, for all its infelicity, has had to use this type of "transition" terminology. In order that the problem of evil does not arise till after man has decided to actualize himself, Tillich has posited an essential state of man as an ontologically potential state (if it is possible to make any sense of this) even though such an essential state must not be considered as ever actualized. The acceptance of such a state without any reference to time, will preface the entrance of man into existence₂ when time does commence.

What, then are the results of the Fall? Tillich's answer to this question is:

The state of existence is the state of estrangement. Man is estranged from the ground of his being, from other beings and from himself. The transition from essence to existence results in personal guilt and universal tragedy.⁵⁹

The "state of existence" here referred to is what I have termed existence₂. So existence₂ occurs because of the splitting apart of that which is formerly united, since estrangement means that "man as he exists is not what he essentially is and ought to be."⁶⁰ The special force of estrangement has a connotation that man belongs to that from

⁵⁹ S.T., II., pp. 44-45.

⁶⁰ S.T., II., p. 45.

which he is separated, or, as Tillich declares, "separation presupposes an original unity.... It is impossible to unite that which is essentially separated." Unity embraces both itself and estrangement since "without an ultimate belongingness, no union of one thing with another can be conceived."⁶¹

For Tillich, existence₂ is separation; but sin is also separation.

To be in a state of sin is to be in a state of separation. And separation is threefold: there is separation among individual lives, separation of a man from himself, and separation of all men from the Ground of being.⁶²

Comparing this quotation with one which has just been given, we see that the same ideas are expressed for both estrangement and for sin. Are we, then, to understand the words "estrangement" and "sin" as synonyms or are they just correlatives?

Tillich asserts that the meaning of the word "sin" has become "entirely unintelligible" by the confusion which is caused by the identification of the uses of the words "sin" and "sins."⁶³ The church (both Catholic and Protestant) has confused the concept of "sin" as separation with "sins" as "deviation from moral laws"⁶⁴ and of "certain acts which are not conventional and not approvable."⁶⁵

Though Tillich thus distinguishes between the use of the word "sins" (in the plural) and the use of the word "sin" as separation,

⁶¹L.P.J., p. 25.

⁶²S.F., pp. 154-155.

⁶³T.C., p. 123.

⁶⁴S.T., II., p. 46.

⁶⁵T.C., p. 123.

the distinction between "sin" and "estrangement" appears somewhat more confused. The apparent confusion is created when we look at what Tillich says about these two concepts "sin" and "estrangement." He declares: "yet estrangement is what sin means -- the power of estrangement from God. And that is all it means."⁶⁶ But he does not accept the synonymy of sin and estrangement since sin "expresses what is not applied in the term estrangement."⁶⁷

The difficulty with Tillich's thought is partly that it requires clarification and partly that it requires further development. The fall, which is the transition from essence to existence₂ causes estrangement, which is separation from God. It is not finitude as such that is sinful, since finitude refers both to essence (existence₁) and existence₂.⁶⁸ The positive element (essence) in the finite, remains the "good" factor, not the sinful factor.⁶⁹ Sin, however, is estrangement with the addition of one very important factor, namely, "the personal act of turning away from that to which one belongs."⁷⁰ So sin is called a personal act, and thus the state of existence now being referred to is human personal existence, namely

⁶⁶U.C., p. 98.

⁶⁷S.T., II., p. 46 (my italics).

⁶⁸Cf. p. 30 above.

⁶⁹See P. Tillich, Christianity and the Encounter of World Religions (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 65. "The negative judgment, therefore, in Christianity is directed against the world in its existence, not in its essence, against the fallen, not the created world."

⁷⁰S.T., II., p. 46: L.P.J., pp. 76-77.

existence₂.⁷¹

To explain this personal act of turning away from God, we may recall that when man is in a state of existence₁, he is "caught between the desire to actualize his freedom and the demand to preserve his dreaming innocence."⁷² The state of temptation, Tillich contends, is reflected in the anxiety involved in man's awareness of his finite freedom, and this anxiety is of a two-fold nature. Man is simultaneously anxious, on the one hand, about losing himself by not actualizing himself and his potentialities. On the other hand, he is anxious about losing himself since he finds that he fails to achieve his destiny. If he decides to exercise his freedom, he loses his unity with God: if he decides not to exercise it, he loses his free self. In either way, however, he loses himself because he cannot retain both his freedom and his destiny. "He stands" declares Tillich, "between the preservation of his dreaming innocence without experiencing the actuality of being and the loss of his innocence through knowledge, power and guilt."⁷³ In this situation of anxiety and temptation, man, it is believed, generally decides for self-actualization, thus ending his "dreaming innocence" and personally affecting the transition from existence₁ to existence₂.

We might now be able to say that in the essential state, man

⁷¹But sin has another connotation. It is the "unreconciled duality of ultimate and primary concerns, of the finite which transcends finitude, of the secular and the holy." (S.T., I., p. 218).

⁷²S.T., II., p. 35.

⁷³S.T., II., p. 36. Cf. P. Tillich, "Psychotherapy and a Christian Interpretation of Human Nature" Review of Religion XIII (1949), 265.

is continually in union with the ground of his being. Man is with God. This is where man ought to be; this is his essence. But the one thing which is absent is freedom. The transition from essence to existence₂ includes but is not reducible to estrangement; the actualization of his freedom brings with it the turning away, by a personal act, from his ground. Sin, then, is a more personal and specific notion; estrangement a broader one in application. The coincidence in human existence₂ lies in that because man is estranged (existence₂ is estranged existence), individual human beings sin.⁷⁴

Sin is far more ontological in Tillich than moral or even theological. It is a state of being, or better, existence₂. Tillich does not equate finitude and sin, since finite essence is not sin, but finite essence actualized (in existence₂) is sin, because sin separates man from his true essence. Essence retains its dialectical relationship with God, even under the distortions of existence₂. So salvation, in Tillich's terms, is basically not a re-establishment of the God-man relationship, since that relationship continues, though ambiguously, within essence under existential distortion. Existence, per se has no interest in salvation; in fact, it opposes salvation. It is man's essence, under the conditions of existence,

⁷⁴ A full analysis of the concept of sin in Tillich's philosophical theology is too large and complex a notion to include in this study. For the relation between Sin and the Demonic see I.H., pp. 77-122 especially pp. 93-96; for the relation of sin to "anxiety of guilt" see C.B., pp. 51f and P.E., p. 242; consult R. Niebuhr op. cit., T.P.T., esp. pp. 219-224; for the relation between sin and evil see R. Allen Killen, The Ontological Theology of Paul Tillich (H.J. Kok. N.V. Kampen, 1965), Chapter VII, pp. 168-193. Consult also J. Heywood Thomas op. cit., pp. 119-133; A.J. McKelway, The Systematic Theology of Paul Tillich (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964), pp. 145-157; Kenneth Hamilton, The System and the Gospel (London: S.C.M. Press, 1963), pp. 145-157.

which is interested in salvation.⁷⁵

The fundamental discovery (or re-discovery) arising from modern man's self-analysis is at the basis of Tillich's method of correlation. Tillich attempts to correlate or systematically to link some contemporary analyses of man's predicament by Christian existentialists like Kierkegaard and secular existentialists like Heidegger with the answers provided by the symbolic propositions used in the Christian message. Estrangement may be viewed as a double relation, the relation of man's existential₂ being to his essential being, and his relation as a being to Being-itself (to God as the ground of his being). In his original actualization of personality, man has some kind of power of being, power to achieve many fresh actualizations. Man includes within himself the potentialities of the inorganic, organic and psychological realms. Other animals unite these three realms within themselves, but man differs from other animals. For out of the psychological realm in the case of man emerges what Tillich calls a spiritual dimension.⁷⁶ It is this possession of spirit, wherein are united more potentialities and more powers to actualize potentialities than are found in any other animal, that makes man supreme among particular beings.

Tillich's formal definition of "spirit" is "unity of power and meaning."⁷⁷ Due consideration of the power possessed by any personal individual reveals that which is crucial for the existence₂

⁷⁵ Cf. also pp. 54-55 below.

⁷⁶ Cf. S.T., III., p. 21.

⁷⁷ S.T., III., p. 22.

of this individual, namely the power for conceptualization and speech supplied by the ground of his being. It is this power which is the critical factor in making the difference between his being (existence₂) and non-being.

Tillich considers that man is peculiar in that he is aware of the greater range of potentialities than is enjoyed by any other animals of which man has knowledge. As Tillich says,

He is the highest grade (among all the realms of being) from the point of view of valuation, presupposing that the criterion of such value judgment is the power of a being to include the maximum number of potentialities in one living actuality.⁷⁸

His spiritual dimension directs him to perform actions of communication and reflection that bear meaning. He is able to understand and formulate utterances and inscriptions which have a sense. He can appraise the truth and falsity of propositions which are the primary vehicles of meaning. Man's differentia as a rational animal is crucially connected with man's power of language by which he is able to move beyond the ordinary stimulus-response patterns of other living things. He enjoys a vast range of conceptual freedom through the universals given him by language.⁷⁹

Language is the nucleus around which human culture builds itself. This does not mean that just any culture or society of organisms, which through language, actualizes a number of potentialities would thereby have to be spiritual. It is the actualizations of potentialities within man himself as a self-conscious being able to

⁷⁸ S.T., III., p. 17.

⁷⁹ S.T., I., pp. 177, 254-255.

reflect in his 'inner consciousness' on language and concepts, and not merely linguistic actualizations of apparently rule governed 'speech-behaviour-patterns' in an organic environment, which make applicable the concepts of meaning and power that underlie Tillich's use of the word "spirit." "Spirit" is to be used not only to refer to the actualizations of just any human potentialities, but also to the meaning or semantic dimension associated with distinctively human actualizations in both 'speech-behaviour-patterns' and 'inner consciousness.' Language with its tremendous power assists man in his reflective 'inner' search for an understanding (or meta-understanding) of what underlies this grasp of meaning which is associated with the power. Thus language aids man in his attempt to remain in contact with the power of Being-itself through this spiritual dimension of humanity. It must be noted that the concept of spirit in Tillich's thought is connected with certain aspects of human psychology and must not be identified with the traditional concept (associated particularly with Plato's Phaedo) of the soul, or separable spiritual substance that can be disembodied. Every cognitive set requires that sense perceptions, habits of thought, traditional or historical background and many other features of human existence₂, be transformed into knowledge. They must be processed, and assessed by rational human minds that characteristically employ logical and methodological criteria.

The transcendence of the (psychological) center over the psychological material makes the cognitive act possible, and such an act is a manifestation of the spirit.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ S.T., III., p. 27.

The most general questions for philosophy and theology about man may all be subsumed under the triple problem of finitude, estrangement and ambiguity.

Man's predicament, out of which the existential questions arise, must be characterized by three concepts: finitude with respect to man's essential being as creature, estrangement with respect to man's existential being in space and time, ambiguity with respect to man's participation in life universal.⁸¹

Thus Tillich asserts the three main categories of the condition of existence are finitude, estrangement and conflict or ambiguity. We have examined the concept of finitude and seen that we may accept the corollary of Tillich's, equating the existence₂ of man qua distinctively personal being with the existence₂ of finite freedom. Since man is finite, it follows that man's being, both at the essential and existential₂ levels, is mixed with non-being. For this is what is meant by being finite. Man emerges into being (existence₂) by virtue of the power of all being, namely God or Being-itself. It is only by remaining, to use Tillich's words, "in relation with God," the ground of being,⁸² that man is protected from the threat of non-being. In other words, man is not the self-sufficient cause of his own existence₂, and at any time he may cease to be. The divine creativity

⁸¹S.T., III., pp. 285-286.

⁸²Of course, every existent₂ being stands in some relation to God: this is a tautology since one Tillichian definition of God is "the ground of (all) being." Tillich seems to mean "in the proper relation to God." "The ground of being" means "the creative source of everything that has being." But quite how Tillich's post-theological God can both fail to be a transcendent Creator, and succeed in being creative is hard to state without falling back on woolly, quasi-pantheistic metaphors - or on an appeal to almost ineffable mystical experience.

sustains man throughout his whole existence₂. On the positive side, the immediate force of Tillich's doctrine of finitude is that man is essentially a finite being (man's essence is existence₁). Each particular has existence₂ as a derivative consequence of the finitude inherent in the human condition.

Both the basic ontological structure and the ontological elements imply finitude. Selfhood, individuality, dynamics and freedom all include manifoldness, definiteness, differentiation and limitation. To be something is not to be something else. To be here and now in the process of becoming is not to be there and then. All categories of thought and reality express this situation. To be something is to be finite.⁸³

Estrangement is a feature of existence₂ only because finitude and freedom are features of existence₁, and, as we have already seen, existence₂ presupposes existence₁. Although estrangement itself is beyond particular cases of existence₂, it is still a feature of existence₂. It is an a priori (in the sense discussed on p. 40 above) feature of existence₂. It is particular men who sin, because man is estranged from God. Tillich writes:

Man's predicament, out of which the existential questions arise, must be characterized by three concepts: finitude with respect to man's essential being as creative; estrangement with respect to man's existential being in time and space, ambiguity with respect to man's participation in life universal.⁸⁴

Salvation must therefore be defined in terms beyond particular cases of existence, since salvation is healing and "healing means reuniting that which is estranged, giving a center to what is split, overcoming the split between man and God, man and his world, and man

⁸³ S.T., I., pp. 189-190.

⁸⁴ S.T., III., pp. 285-286.

and himself."⁸⁵ It is the revelation of New Being in Jesus as the Christ which brings salvation. Consequently "where there is revelation there is salvation," since the revelation of Being-itself as the ground of being is that which heals and changes the personality, but it is only appealing to the essential self. On a number of occasions, Tillich has reflected upon how the love revealed in Jesus as the Christ reunites estranged mankind with its ground.⁸⁶

These terms must lead to reflection on essence. Tillich would say that the chief category is New Being,⁸⁷ a category to which spirit (the union of power and meaning) directs man.⁸⁸ This will enable man through the power whereby he grasps meaning to attempt to obtain knowledge of New Being and of God himself.

Ambiguity, for Tillich, refers to the doubts and difficulties, the conflicts, anxiety, fear and even death which result because of his estrangement from God.⁸⁹ This leads man to contemplate what is termed the unambiguous life.⁹⁰

Language will have to supply the means of communication and association which will empower man to understand the concept of

⁸⁵ S.T., p. 166. Tillich has often dwelt upon the idea of salvation as healing. See, for example, S.T., III., pp. 275-282; N.B., pp. 34-45; E.N., pp. 112-121.

⁸⁶ See N.B., Part I. For New Being, see Appendix 6.

⁸⁷ See appendix 6 on New Being.

⁸⁸ See appendix 7 on Categories.

⁸⁹ Tillich deals with, among others, the ambiguities in the linguistic, cognitive and aesthetic self-creation of life (S.T., III., pp. 68-86) and the ambiguities of religion (S.T., III, pp. 98-106).

⁹⁰ S.T., III., pp. 107-110.

salvation, so essential to man's destiny. Through use of language, through reflection on its use, and through the eventual grasp of the concept of salvation, man can succeed in pointing himself and orienting himself towards the ground of his being. He can so move toward the essential and thus to God himself.

In his attempt to interpret the truth of the Christian message to a new generation, Tillich employs many forms of 'communication,' forms of what we might call language, myth, metaphor and particularly symbols. But as he employs such forms he often redefines such terms in his own special way. He recognizes that language is by no means a perfect instrument and that it can be very misleading. For example, sentences which have the same grammatical form may perform very different logical functions,⁹¹ and Tillich is well aware of this fact. But as one begins to reason philosophically, one must begin by way of language as it is socially given, in attempting to unravel what Tillich would call the meaning of the problem of life. Thus Tillich himself would say that reflection on language can assist man to adjust and adapt himself to a "closer walk with God."

⁹¹Two sentences are said to have the same 'grammatical' form if they share a 'surface grammatical' structure like that of "A is B," where "A" is a so-called "subject term" and "B" is a so-called "predicate term" and "A" is linked to "B" by the so-called copulative use of "is." Consider, for example, (1) "the horse is a four-legged animal" and (2) "the unicorn is a four-legged animal." These two sentences are said to differ 'logically,' "for what logic requires of a language is to avoid contradiction." See Contemporary British Philosophy ed. J.H. Muirhead, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1924), Vol. I., p. 377. Also B. Russell, "Descriptions," Semantics and the Philosophy of Language, ed. L. Linsky, (Illinois-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1952), pp. 95-108. Characteristically (1) is used to state a fact about what is actual while (2) is used to state a contingent truth of fiction or a conceptual truth about a mythical beast that the speaker knows to be mythical.

It would seem essential, therefore, to examine some of the ways in which human beings use language in its very different forms and especially some of the most important ways in which it may be used by them for descriptions and communication concerning what they may take to be their Deity, or proper object of human latreia.

CHAPTER III

LANGUAGE ABOUT GOD

Long before Anselm, as we see in such writings as Pseudo-Dionysius¹ and Erigena,² theologians who had no doubts about the existence and transcendence of an infinite God, admitted that there were grave conceptual problems concerning how finite creatures could understand the meaning of such phrases as "the existence of the infinite God" and "the transcendence of God."³ Anselm, often sensitive to such conceptual questions, proposed a policy of believing in order

¹Dionysius the Areopagite, On the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology by C.E. Rolt, (London S.P.C.K., 1920 - new edition 1940), "For as the Goodness of the all transcendent Godhead reaches from the highest and most perfect forms of being unto the lowest, and still is beyond them all, remaining superior to those above and retaining those below in its embrace, and so gives light to all things that can receive It, and creates and vitalizes and maintains and perfects them, and is the Measure of the Universe and its Eternity, its Numerical Principle, its Order, its Embracing Power, its Cause and its End"... On the Divine Names, Chapter IV, section 4 (pp. 91-92). It is interesting to note the Aristotelian classification of causes. The Good is

- (1) Formal Cause (a) Immanent in the World (order)
(b) containing the World (Embracing power)
- (2) Efficient Cause (Cause)
- (3) Final Cause (End)

²See Henry Bett, Johannes Scotus Erigena (New York: Russell and Russell Inc., 1964 - first published 1925). "God precedes the World, not in time, but in reason since He is the cause of all and is himself uncaused (909A), and all exists, causatively, in Him from all eternity" (640). See Erigena's Writings by H.J. Floss in the Patrologia Latina, Vol. 122.

³Armand A. Maurer, Medieval Philosophy (New York: Random House, 1962), pp. 35-46.

to understand.⁴ In the twentieth century such conceptual questions about theology's intelligibility have been raised with equal passion and effort by (a) people who, like Pseudo-Dionysius and Anselm have had no doubts about the existence of a personal, transcendent God spoken of in Scripture; (b) people like A.J. Ayer and J.N. Findlay who would banish theology for a priori reasons concerning meaninglessness and/or contradiction;⁵ (c) people like Tillich who largely agree that belief in a personal, transcendent God is partly pseudo-belief in an absurdity and partly false beliefs in claims incompatible with scientific knowledge. What most clearly distinguishes Tillich from a verificationist such as Ayer is Tillich's belief that a sophisticated approach to meaning and meaningfulness will locate important post-theological or quasi-theological truths that are non-literally expressed by Scripture. Tillich, very much unlike Ayer (early or late), believes that philosophers should be centrally concerned with the reading and interpretation of Scripture so as to enucleate the most important philosophical truths about man in a natural world, that confronts man with a proper object of Latreia. (Here "object" must not be understood as a distinct "thing" or "substance" distinguishable from others).

⁴Isaiah VII, 9 (Septuagint version). "Unless you believe, you shall not understand." See The Ontological Argument ed. A. Platiga, (New York: Doubleday, 1965), p. 3ff. From Anselm's Proslogion and St. Augustine De Trinitate XV, ii, 2. "I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order that I may understand."

⁵A.J. Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic (New York: Dover Publications, 1936), pp. 33-34. J.N. Findlay, "Can God's Existence be Disproved?" in New Essays in Philosophical Theology ed. Antony Flew and A. MacIntyre, (London: S.C.M. Press, 1955), pp. 47-55.

Thus, in the contemporary era, general problems about language and meaningfulness have aroused considerable interest among people with very diverse attitudes to scripture and traditional theology. It may be suggested that these problems, though many and diverse, could be subsumed (at least initially) under two main headings, meaning and communication.

III. 1. Empiricism and Meaning.

Under the heading of meaning one must raise for purposes of philosophical theology at least two largely distinguishable questions. (A) Does this theological sentence S in its use U have meaning at all? That is, Does S in U satisfy certain antecedently established general criteria for the meaningfulness of sentences? (B) If S in U has a meaning or meanings, (i.e., satisfies such antecedent criteria), what should the meaning or meanings be taken to be? Of these two problems about theological uses of language, the question (A) about meaning, has taken precedence. This is as it should be, for the question of meaningfulness of a statement is fundamental, and in any case, is logically prior to question (B). The challenge presented by questions about whether theology makes any sense at all was vigorously raised by the positivists, who showed a great esteem for what they took to be science, and an extreme contempt for what they took to be metaphysics, though they were not the first to evince this detestation.⁶

⁶For Example, D. Hume, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, XII, iii, cited by A.J. Ayer, op. cit., p. 54. Also D. Hume, Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion in Hume on Religion ed. R.

The logical positivists were not so much concerned with the truth and falsity of scientific statements, although they cared greatly for truth and accuracy in science, as they were concerned with (A) and (B) types of meaning-questions about various different sorts of apparently respectable scientific claims. For example, universal generalizations and counterfactual conditionals in science raised for them questions of both types.⁷ They tried to devise criteria of meaningfulness and significance, about which they argued hotly among themselves, that would offer a clear decision-procedure for settling (A) type questions of meaning. They hoped to devise a test satisfying commonsense intuitions and scientific demands which all desirable forms of scientific statements could pass, but which would not concede significance to any form of metaphysical assertion. The sets of criteria successively proposed and discarded were intended to offer a satisfactory Verification Principle for deciding (A) - questions. These proposals caused many discussions and disputes. One of the proposals, resulting from the Vienna Circle's misinterpretation of a remark by Wittgenstein, was that the meaning of any genuine statement - as opposed to a pseudo-statement - is shown by the way in which it can be verified. This proposal led to all sorts of apparently "hard-nosed" philosophical claims about meaning, claims which

Wollheim (London: Fontana Library, 1963) p. 160; and W.H. Walsh, Metaphysics (London: Hutchinson Univ. Library, 1963), p. 13 where reference is made to Voltaire, Herder and Burke.

⁷ Consult John King - Farlow, Reason and Religion (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1969) Appendix 1. Also J.O. Urmson, Philosophical Analysis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), pp. 102-109.

were queries for the sake of hard-nosedness by those who find such terms as "analyticity," "empirical observation," and "sense-experience" unclear in positivist usage.⁸ Thus admirers of certain forms of the Verification Principle, such as Carnap and Ayer, held that all non-analytic statements made by metaphysicians and theologians on duty, in as much as these could not be empirically verified, were without "cognitive" (factual, assertive) significance or meaning. Many sentences are thought to have meaning because they are successfully used to refer to some tangible or intangible referent. It might be suggested that because various theological statements seem to be used to refer successfully to a transcendent deity, that therefore they must be meaningfully used since they refer to a reality, God. However, it is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition of a sentence being used meaningfully that it contain a referring expression to which an appropriate referent corresponds.⁹ Such a suggestion begs the questions (i) that "God" and "transcendent deity" make sense and (ii) that "God, a transcendent deity exists" is both meaningful and true. Worse still, the suggestion involves the confusions just noted about what Frege would call Sense and Reference

⁸W.V.O. Quine, From a Logical Point of View (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), pp. 20-46. Morton G. White, "The Analytic and the Synthetic" in L. Linsky, Semantics and the Philosophy of Language (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1952), pp. 272-286; Nelson Goodman, "The Problems of Counterfactual Conditionals" in L. Linsky, op. cit., pp. 231-247.

⁹For example, "the man in the moon has two gold teeth" seems intelligible enough to me, although "the man in the moon" is, to the best of my Yorkshire knowledge, a non-denoter. Again, "President Nixon ate the presuppositions of Uncle Tom's Cabin under the shade of a Pentagon neutrino" is pleasingly unintelligible although "President Nixon" as I write this footnote remains a denoter.

when he spoke about terms and about propositions.¹⁰

The term "empirical language" does not, as is sometimes supposed, always express a clear and precise concept. One of the most confused concepts of an empirical language is that of a language in which every word stands for an empirically observed entity and that entity is regarded as the meaning of the word in question. The confusion of Sense with Reference, of denotans and denotatum with "intelligibility" of "meaningful word" with "successfully naming noun" is much discussed by Wittgenstein.¹¹

A somewhat different concept of an empirical language is that of one whose meaningful non-analytic propositions are all checkable by reference to some observable facts. Thus the term "empiricism" can be used in many senses and indeed many pseudo-senses. "Empiricism" in some sense of that word can be used to characterize John Locke's writings. Hume seems to insist on something like a "strong" empiricism in which propositions containing empirical matters of fact should be verified (in some sense of "verified") and so his philosophical ideas have been regarded as a major ancestor of logical positivism in its search for a perfect Verification Principle.¹² It would

¹⁰ See G. Frege, "On Sense and Nominatum" in Readings in Philosophical Analysis, eds. Herbert Feigl and Wilfred Sellars (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949), pp. 82-102, especially pp. 87f. See also the previous chapter, footnote 3.

¹¹ In many sections of his writings, Wittgenstein discusses the point made here. See, for example, Philosophical Investigations, 10-43, 49, 55, 56, 59, 65-67, and The Blue Book, pp. 17-25.

¹² John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding. "All things that exist, being particulars, it may be thought reasonable that words, which ought to be conformed to things, should be so too; I mean in their significance: yet we find the quite contrary.... It

seem that there is little opportunity of making sense of any statements in theological language, if a "strong" type of empiricism is adopted, especially if this forces us to try to find an entity to be the meaning of a word, whatever kind of word in whatever sentence and sentence-use we study.

By now I hope it is clear that what philosophers mean by "empiricism" is often unclear. J.A. Martin gives a helpful indication of the wide variety of approaches called empirical in the following passage:

To be 'empirical' in the approach to philosophical problems may mean simply to be "realistic" or "tough-minded": to take full account of all the relevant data and to blink at none of the significant "facts".... Or empiricism may be associated primarily with an "appeal to experience" in the establishment and defence of philosophical doctrines, a deference to the "given," whether "experience" be conceived as consisting essentially of sense-data, or whether it be construed more liberally. Again empiricism may be viewed as primarily methodological in import, signifying a particular type of enquiry, usually with an emphasis on a posteriori hypotheses and induction as over against rationalistic and logical or metaphysical a prioris.¹³

is impossible that every particular thing should have a distinct particular name." (Locke's Selections ed. Sterling P. Lamprecht, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), pp. 29-30. Early in both his Treatise and the Enquiry Hume states that the fundamental principle of empiricism is contained in the proposition "that all our simple ideas in their first appearance are derived from simple impressions, which are correspondent to them, and which they exactly represent." This is a type of empiricism which the early A.J. Ayer would label "strong" and is similar to the notion of the Logical Positivists about protocol or basic sentences. But whereas the Positivists only built on this foundation in terms of what can be deduced from basic sentences, Hume goes on (in the Enquiry) to speak of the "creative power" of the mind in terms of "compounding, transposing, augmenting, and diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience." D. Hume A Treatise of Human Nature ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 4.

¹³ J.A. Martin, Empirical Philosophers of Religion (New York: King's Crown Press, 1945), p. 110.

Obviously not all claims made in theological language should be regarded as empirical claims in the sense of being claims fully checkable in principle by linguistic animals using the five senses and scientific instruments. But theologians often seem to make empirical claims in something like this sense of "empirical" in the course of expounding their religious beliefs.¹⁴ For example, some historical statements made in the Bible are empirical assertions. Christian theology asserts that the focal point of the New Testament is an actual historical person Jesus, who lived, taught and died in a given historical period. Again, the arguments put forward in natural theology are often based partly on statements about observable facts within the world, and theological conclusions (validly or invalidly drawn) from sets of premises that include such statements.

When theologians make such empirical claims, philosophers tend very understandably to be least interested in asking meaning-questions of types (A) and (B) about such discourse. Again, when the theologian seems not to be making any factual claims or asking factual questions or issuing commands whose satisfaction or non-satisfaction would be considered a matter of fact, philosophers tend not to be unduly concerned about the theologian's uses of religious discourse.¹⁵

The well known advice of Wittgenstein's to ask for the use,

¹⁴See R.S. Heimbeck, Theology and Meaning (London: Allen and Unwin, 1969), Chapter V, passim, and the review clarifying Heimbeck's methodological assumptions about empirical claims in the Bible by John King-Farlow, Philosophical Quarterly, XXI, (No. 82 1971), 92f.

¹⁵The words 'fact' and 'factual' are sometimes philosophically puzzling; I find their use here reasonably clear. Some philosophers might prefer to use 'cognitive' for 'factual' here.

not the meaning, of a word or sentence is certainly sound advice, if it is remembered, as Wittgenstein made clear, that the two terms "use" and "meaning" are often not synonymous.¹⁶ Sometimes studying the uses of words and sentences, that is their conventionally intended functions in familiar pieces of discourse will be far more productive of philosophical insight than attempting to hunt for precise definitions or analysantia. For though most words and sentences in frequent use do have meanings, and while these meanings are necessary for communication, not all useful words can be simply defined by reference to exact synonyms, and G.E. Moore seems right to have insisted that often we know quite well enough what a sentence means in a particular use without our being able to analyze fully and explicitly what it means.

Attention to the conventional uses of words and sentences by modern analysts has made it abundantly clear that there are hosts of interesting and meaningful uses of words and sentences other than uses for making factual, (cognitive, true-or-false, etc.,) claims, asking questions with factual answers, and issuing commands whose satisfaction or non-satisfaction is a matter of fact. Performative and emotive uses of language which may involve few or none of these three factual mores can play an important part in some religious ways of life, in prayer, liturgies, inspirings, forgivings, cursings,

¹⁶ L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, 43, op. cit., J.N. Findlay has insisted that Wittgenstein is suggesting no more than one among different possible ways of thinking of meaning (Cf. his review of Philosophical Investigations in Philosophy, XXX (1955), 174. See also John Wisdom, Paradox and Discovery (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), p. 88. For dangers that result from identifying meaning with use see J.R. Searle, Speech Acts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), pp. 39-40 - and pp. 146-149.

weddings, promisings, praisings, etc. But quite often such uses pre-suppose belief in the truth of theological claims if one is to praise, pray, forgive, curse, etc. really in the manner of a religious tradition like that of first century Christianity. At any rate, I am interested for purposes of this dissertation very largely in Tillich's reinterpretations of Biblical and theological claims about what is the truth concerning man and his situation. Though Tillich might sometimes be forced to speak of his use of his own meta-language for reinterpreting traditional theism as more often symbolic than literal, he does aim to communicate truths about man in language that has a crucial element of cognitive meaning. He intends, successfully or not, to make assertions and plenty of them, not just to pronounce emotive incantations or make people happy with words that have pleasant associations etc. And so in turning next to communication, I am primarily interested in the communicating of theological or post-theological truths. But before I do turn to communication in connection with Tillich's epistemology, let me note and comment briefly on certain remarks by Tillich himself about meanings. Some part of these remarks I find more satisfactory than others. But for me to enucleate what Tillich means by some of his claims about man, language, God and nature, it is not necessarily required that I share his 'theory' of meaning. If one had to share (accept) all of each and every person's 'theories' about meaning in order to understand anything of what he meant, philosophers and indeed mankind would make little or no critical progress.

Tillich insists in his fashion of discourse on the primary necessity of clarifying meanings of concepts before considering either

the question of the reality or validity of the concept. In a very striking paragraph, Tillich writes:

It is the aim of the so-called phenomenological method to describe "meanings," disregarding, for the time being, the question of the reality to which they refer. The significance of this methodological approach lies in its demand that the meaning of a notion must be clarified and circumscribed before its validity can be determined, before it can be approved or rejected. In too many cases, especially in the realm of religion, an idea has been taken in its undistilled, vague, or popular sense and made the victim of an easy and unfair rejection. Theology must apply the phenomenological approach to all its basic concepts, forcing its critics first of all to see what the criticized concepts mean and also forcing itself to make careful descriptions of its concepts and to use these with logical consistency, thus avoiding the danger of trying to fill in logical gaps with devotional material.... The test of a phenomenological description is that the picture given by it is convincing, that it can be seen by anyone who is willing to look in the same direction, that the description illuminates other related ideas, and that it makes the reality which these ideas are supposed to reflect understandable.¹⁷

We have presented the challenge of the empiricist to statements which belong to the area of theistic belief, and we have also seen that Tillich was well aware of the criticisms offered. We have already stated that Tillich set himself the double task of confronting the successors of logical positivistic tradition, and to bring

¹⁷S.T., I., p. 106. This fashion can be quite confusing. I myself would prefer to talk of clarifying concepts by clarifying the meanings of words and sentences when they occur in various types of conventional USE according to RULES. Thus I find talk of clarifying the meaning of concepts too suggestive of confusions between (1) concepts utilized and expressed by meaningful uses of language and (2) meaningful uses of language. Rather than speak of the reality or validity of concepts, I would prefer to talk about the reality of some of the 'things' about which we conceptualize; to talk of the validity of arguments and inferences involving certain concepts; to talk of the utility, applicability, clarity, exemplification, hermeneutic value etc., of concepts. But, for better or for worse, my preferences here are not Tillich's.

new life in the form of new words and symbols in an attempt to satisfy what appeared to be reasonable in the Empiricist demands. Tillich regarded the religious symbol as the centre of his theological epistemology.¹⁸ He used the symbol to offer at least a partial solution to the "confusion of language in theology," and because the analysis of the religious symbol is regarded by him as an epistemological task, it is appropriate that, before we undertake this analysis, we examine what Tillich means by epistemology.

III. 2. Tillich's Epistemology.

General.

At the beginning of his Systematic Theology, Tillich states what a theological system should convey.

A theological system is supposed to satisfy two basic needs: the statement of the truth of the Christian message and the interpretation of this truth for every new generation. Theology moves back and forth between two poles, the eternal truth of its foundation and the temporal situation in which the eternal truth must be received.¹⁹

If the two basic needs of theology which Tillich suggests are viewed in the light of his statement concerning the task of theology, namely the correlation between the questions raised by the philosophical situation and the answers provided by the Christian message, we see immediately that his purpose is "apologetic" in character. If Tillich is to have any success in this task, he must show that there is some common ground (some point of contact) between the human

¹⁸T.P.T., p. 233; S.T., I., pp. 60f.

¹⁹S.T., I., p. 3.

existential situation and the Christian message;

In order to answer a question one must have something in common with the person who asks it. Apologetics presupposes common ground, however vague it may be.²⁰

The "point of contact between scientific research and theology lies in the philosophical element in both the sciences and theology."²¹ And as the point of contact or common ground lies in the philosophical content, it would be relevant at this juncture to enquire into Tillich's idea or definition of philosophy. With the correlation just referred to in mind, Tillich states that philosophy is

that cognitive approach to reality in which reality as such is the object.... inquiring into those structures, categories, and concepts which are presupposed in the cognitive encounter with every realm of being.²²

The question of the nature of reality, that is, the ontological question of philosophy, is also the central question of theology.²³ These two disciplines approach the ontological question with different attitudes - philosophy in an objective, detached way, theology in a subjective, soteriological way. But each discipline, in seeking to understand reality or being, appears to converge and diverge from the other. However, the two disciplines are autonomous in their study of the basic question of being, and hence, says Tillich, "there is no

²⁰ S.T., I., p. 6.

²¹ S.T., I., p. 18.

²² S.T., I., p. 19.

²³ S.T., I., pp. 22-25.

common basis" for conflict or synthesis.²⁴ Out of the autonomy of the theological discipline there emerges what Tillich has called the "theological circle."²⁵ Yet all approaches to being, to "being-itself," to "the cosmic whole," to "the universe" are based on "an immediate experience of something ultimate in value and being of which one can become aware intuitively" which is "a point of identity between the experiencing subject and the ultimate."²⁶

Though Tillich appears to suggest that both the basic needs required of a philosophical and a theological system are of approximately equal importance, it seems to me that a very good case could be made out and could be argued for placing Tillich himself among that class of theologians who concern themselves primarily with the interpretation of the Christian message "for every new generation"; in other words, in offering a "new" explication for the present situation. I think that there can be no question that on a number of occasions, Tillich deviates both from the quasi-literal interpretation

²⁴ S.T., I, pp. 26-28. What may seem to be a contradiction here, namely, the requirement of a common ground and the autonomy of the two disciplines, is more apparent than real. Two things or disciplines may indeed be autonomous, and still have some basic ingredient in common. Such is the case here, the point of contact being the philosophical content of theology and the philosophical content of philosophy.

²⁵ S.T., I, pp. 8-11. The doctrine of the theological circle has a methodological consequence: neither the introduction nor any other part of the theological system is the "primitive" basis for the other parts. Every part is dependent on every other part. The introduction presupposes the Christology and the doctrine of the church and vice versa. The arrangement is only a matter of expediency. S.T., I, p. 11

²⁶ S.T., I, p. 9.

of ordinary laymen, and from the traditional and orthodox expositions.²⁷

For Tillich, epistemology is not to be viewed as a peer of ontology in ranking the major categories and most important branches of philosophy. Epistemology's philosophical importance is rather to

²⁷ For example, it has already been noticed (in Chapter II, pp. 43ff) that Tillich's interpretations of the Fall and Creation differ from the conventional ones. Another example is the doctrine of salvation which consists of three relations, regeneration, justification and sanctification, of New Being to those it grasps. Regeneration means that God has accepted man, or as Tillich says, "God has accepted the unacceptable" (S.T., II., p. 177). Man then (in justification) "must accept that he is accepted" (S.T., II., p. 179). One should notice that justification is not through good works or good deeds on man's part, but that it is God and God alone who is the cause behind man's salvation: salvation is by grace. Thus it is God who moves toward the estranged creature, establishing within the creature's estranged world the actuality of New Being. The faith-response through which man enters upon his New Being is not only the channel by which he appropriates the potentiality of New Being for himself, but it is also the continuing channel for the mediation of grace as he actualizes time and time again in his concrete experience the New Being which is in him. Faith is not a synonym for belief in God, it is a synonym for a relationship in which one stands to God, after our acceptance of his acceptance. Eternal Life does not, for Tillich, mean "endless life" or "the life hereafter," but rather "a quality that transcends temporality" (S.T., III., p. 410). Tillich describes what he considers to be the erroneous commonplace notion of immortality in E.N., pp. 114-115 and 124-125. All the words underlined must be understood as religious symbols, not as concepts. As Tillich points out, historically misunderstandings about, for example, immortality have arisen because the distinction was not made between symbol and concept. As symbol, immortality means "the experience of ultimacy in being and meaning" (S.T., III., p. 410). As a concept, it refers to the existence and nature of the soul as a particular object, a purely philosophical and scientific question. Both Protestant and Catholic theologians thought that they were defending a religious symbol, but actually the attacks of Locke, Hume and Kant were against the concept of a naturally immortal substance. S.T., III., p. 411. See also S.F., pp. 137-138 and pp. 166-167. By the "quasi-literal interpretation of ordinary laymen" I do not mean only to refer to lay Fundamentalists. Many lay Catholics and Protestants reject a literal interpretation of much of the Bible, yet still have (unlike Tillich) a good deal of faith in a dying body/surviving soul dualism and also a belief in a Transcendent Creator of the natural universe.

be seen in its being a vital part of that broad and crucial branch which is ontology. This is clearly stated at the outset of his discussion of reason.

Epistemology, the "knowledge" of knowing, is a part of ontology, the knowledge of being, for knowing is an event within the totality of events. Every epistemological assertion is implicitly ontological. ²⁸

The analysis of Tillich's epistemology will focus upon the place of reason, in view of two things, the importance of reason in the arguments of empiricists, and Tillich's own emphasis on the duality of technical reason and ontological reason. This will be followed by an examination of the subject-object dichotomy for, as Tillich argues, it is only by transcending this relation that man may be able to reach the power of being and meaning.

Finally another dual concept set forth by Tillich will be considered, the division of knowledge into controlling and receiving knowledge. Tillich sees religious knowledge as part of receiving knowledge.

III. 2. a. Reason.

Reason, for Tillich, is an aspect of being. As such, it cannot be discussed as if it denoted anything separated from what has being. As we have already seen, being has two modifications, which we have designated existence₁ and existence₂. Existence₁ is potential or essential being, and existence₂ is human existence in which some of the potentialities have been actualized and some have not. So Tillich considers that reason, being an aspect of being, must also

²⁸ S.T., I., p. 71; see also S.T., I., p. 19.

have essential and existential aspects.

Tillich holds that the term "reason" especially in theological writings, is often used in a vague and loose way. "It is inexcusable," says Tillich, "if a theologian uses terms without having defined or exactly circumscribed them."²⁹ He tries to follow this advice by attempting to give a clear analysis of the way he intends to use this word, that is, he tries hard to clarify how he will stipulate partly new uses for "reason."

Because reason cannot be separated from being, Tillich coins the term "ontological reason." Ontological reason is said to be that reason which is found in all kinds of being, and to be both subjective and objective. This all pervasive character is what distinguishes ontological reason from technical reason. Technical reason is peculiar to man, for through reflection and deliberation he determines the means to particular ends. "Ontological reason" is a much more comprehensive term. As applied to the subject or person, it is used to stand for a structure of mind by which he is able to grasp and shape reality; as applied to reality in its objective form, it is used to stand for a structure whereby it (reality) lends itself to being grasped and shaped. Like all aspects of being, ontological reason has the power to be only by virtue of the Ground of being.³⁰

The concept of technical reason is quite straightforward.

It is reason as instrument, working according to any recognized method of empirical verification, or concerned

²⁹ S.T., I., p. 72.

³⁰ S.T., I., p. 77.

with the formal perfection of an argument or with semantic clarification.³¹

It is the capacity to relate means to ends. Despite the great achievement of technology and the place of methodological facility and insight within the realm of theology, man's use of technical reason is but an expression and sometimes a perversion of ontological reason. In Tillich's view, man's establishing of ends and of means to ends, may be in accord with technical reason or it may conflict with technical reason.

The term "ontological reason" expresses a more difficult concept. It refers to the structure of the mind (or of what Tillich would also call subjective reason) which enables the mind to attempt to render intelligible and comprehend reality. This recognition of the structure of reality is held by Tillich to give form to reality itself and thus it is referred to by Tillich as objective reason.³² Such a position, if taken literally, is paradoxical: if reality already has a form or structure, then that form or structure can be recognized by a human mind. If minds give form to reality then they create and affirm structure and form by the way we think. There is obviously some connection indicated here between reality itself and the way our minds view that reality. I think Tillich is giving us a specific application of his principle of "correlation" pointing out the essential correspondence of the structure of being and the structure of thought. In Tillich's view:

³¹Dorothy Emmet, "Epistemology and the Idea of Revelation," T.P.T., p. 205. See also S.T., III., p. 24.

³²S.T., I., p. 77.

It cannot be denied that a correspondence exists between the human spirit and reality, which is probably best expressed in the concept of "Meaning," and which led Hegel to talk of the unity of the objective with the subjective spirit in an absolute spirit.³³

Both these structures (namely, both subjective and objective reason) have being, and hence we may infer that to each there may be an essential and an existential ingredient. If this is so, Tillich argues with terms that are rather obscure, we may then go a step further and contend that the notion of ontological reason in its essential aspect will be transparent to the Ground of being, for all "things" in the essential aspect are transparent to their Ground.³⁴ This position, perhaps, makes most sense if we think of God as a thinking Being to whom certain truths are transparently clear, rather than thinking of God non-personally as Being-itself, the Ground of Being.

But ontological reason, Tillich holds, is not only partly essential, but partly existential. The existential reality which the mind grasps (objective reason) as well as the structure of the mind itself (subjective reason), both being partially existential, are

³³I.H., p. 61. See also J.L. Adams, Paul Tillich's Philosophy of Culture, Science and Religion (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), T.C., p. 81.

³⁴S.T., I., pp. 80 and 121. On page 75 of S.T., I., Tillich writes: "The religious judgment that reason is "blind," for instance neither refers to technical reason, which can see most things in its own realm very well, nor to ontological reason in its essential perfection, namely, in unity with being-itself. The judgment that reason is blind refers to reason under the conditions of existence; and the judgment that reason is weak -- partly liberated from blindness, partly held in it -- refers to reason within life and history. If these distinctions are not made, every statement about reason is incorrect or dangerously ambiguous."

under the influence of that estrangement which characterizes all actualized being. Because of this estrangement, the "transparency" of ontological reason to its Ground of being is too clouded to be easily grasped by particular existent₂ beings enjoying forms of ontological reason. "The depth of reason is essentially manifest in reason. But it is hidden under the conditions of existence."³⁵ Tillich sometimes refers to the Ground of being as the depth of reason, a metaphor which in this case is perhaps more appropriate than "Ground" because "depth of reason" suggests a non-solid, ungeometrical something while Ground has a spatial connotation of something solid and firm.³⁶

Tillich uses the term "reason" in a much wider and somewhat different sense than is usual today. Today reason is often thought of as an intellectual power or faculty (usually regarded as characteristics of mankind but sometimes also attributed in a certain degree in the lower animals) which is ordinarily employed in adapting thought or action to some end. Or again reason seems frequently to be taken

³⁵ S.T., I., p. 80.

³⁶ Tillich appears to use the metaphor involved in the phrase "depth of reason" in at least two ways. It seems to mean that every rational expression is capable of considerable probing into the possibilities of alternate meanings. There is a kind of bottomlessness about reason. However, Tillich more often appears to mean by the metaphor "the depth of reason" the boundary where the finite being and the Ground of being meet. So the depth of reason in man reveals particularly the reality and experience of Ultimate Being and is Tillich's explanation of what is sometimes classified as general revelation. For Tillich, thinking is rooted in the absolute as its foundation. So "the depth of reason," that depth where grounded reason encounters the Ground of reason, is sometimes used to refer to the Ground of meaning, the Ground of being and the Abyss, all synonyms for Being-itself.

as the guiding principle of the human mind in the process of thinking and performing feats of deductive and inductive inference. Though, as we have seen, Tillich uses a wider connotation he would accept this as that part sometimes called the "reflective-rational."³⁷

Ontological reason consists of two poles: subjective reason and objective reason.³⁸ The mind's subjective reason attempts to appropriate the meaning of objective reason, that is, to grasp the meaningfulness or intelligible structure of reality. It is subjective reason that appreciates this intelligible structure. Without this appreciation, the structure would lack point and value. Tillich wants to go so far as to say that subjective reason brings life and meaning to objective reason. Meaning is thus said by Tillich, never to be given, really or ideally, but to be intended. For Tillich, meaning, or intelligible structure, comes into fulfillment through the subjective realm of spirit. It is spirit that brings things and meanings alive, or, as Tillich says, we "live in... meanings."³⁹ Further on this matter, and writing about free, historical mankind, Tillich says:

The freedom of a being from the necessity of its nature is its power of elevating itself to meaning. In realizing its own meaning it is within itself and beyond itself at the same time.⁴⁰

³⁷ S.T., II., p. 90. "The reflective-rational can also be called the realm of technical reason, namely, that kind of thinking which not only follows the laws of formal logic (as all thinking must) but also believes that the only dimensions of being are those which can be totally grasped with the tool of formal logic."

³⁸ S.T., I., p. 77; S.T., III., p. 24.

³⁹ S.T., III., p. 69.

⁴⁰ I.H., p. 253.

In creating meaning, being rises above itself.... In creating meaning, being gains freedom from itself, from the necessity of its nature.⁴¹

It is, then, in the creation of meaning that one form of self-transcendence occurs. Tillich's striking imagery, evoked by his speaking of being as rising above itself (cf. trans-scando) is indicative of that special power which is a peculiarly human possibility, the power to create meaning.

Though conflicts arise within both technical and existential reason due to their inadequacy, for both are subject to the conditions of existence, Tillich insists upon the great importance of reason. He so insists in spite of the fact that, under the conditions of existence, reason's greatest failure seems to be that it cannot come to grips with experienced and/or ultimate reality. This does not mean that reason under the conditions of existence must be abandoned, but it does mean that the conflicts which arise can only be resolved by valuable help from revelation.⁴² Thus Tillich suggests that revelation must come to the assistance of reason, and this is possible because "reason does not resist revelation. It asks for revelation, for revelation means the re-integration of reason."⁴³

Thus a close connection is seen between ontological reason and the depth of reason, namely, that which is present in every revelation. There must be also a close connection between ontological reason and culture, and concerning this connection Tillich writes at some length.

⁴¹I.H., p. 273.

⁴²S.T., I., pp. 83-93.

⁴³S.T., I., p. 94.

He considers that the largest number of structures or forms proper to man's existence belong to "culture" distinguished from the other two functions, morality and religion. For the dynamic actualization of form is culture, within the human realm. Because of this fact, Tillich's definitive description of "ontological reason," or the intelligible structure of both mind and reality, is almost the same as his identification of the various functions of culture.⁴⁴

III. 2. b. The Subject-Object Relation.

One of the dominant methodological fundamentals of Tillich's theological epistemology, whatever its metaphysical or ontological status, is the subject-object relation and its transcendence. In various ways, it is stated that, for example, in the reception of revelation, the self's knowledge of God and the subsequent self-understanding transcends the subject-object structure of knowing. Naturally, the theological imperative to transcend the subject-object relation has a psychological side to it that is implicit in the theological discussion itself. I believe it would be generally agreed that truth (by some understanding of this difficult term) would involve some sort of correct relation between these two elements of knowing. Perhaps, as the modern world has made a distinction between subjective and objective thinking, which sometimes tends to identify truth with objectivity and error with subjectivity, we see the overstressing of one side of the relation. We might, too, recall what appears to be an overstressing of the other side of the relation in the affirmation

⁴⁴ S.T., I., pp. 71-81; III., pp. 57-66.

of Kierkegaard that "the passion of the infinite is precisely subjectivity, and thus subjectivity becomes the truth."⁴⁵

We have seen that what is problematic in man is his capacity and his need for a kind of personal relatedness which goes beyond the subject-object dichotomy. If man's life is to become religious (in the very broadest sense of that term) the subject-object relation must be transformed and acquire a quality of transcendence. Perhaps the most familiar of the works dealing with the subject-object relation from a theological point of view are those of Martin Buber.⁴⁶ In his best known work, Buber contrasts the relation between an I and a Thou with the relation between an I and an It. The two "primary words" "I-Thou" and "I-It" describe radically different relations of the individual to other beings. A being is an "It" or object to me when I manipulate, control, use and compare it with other beings. For example, a person is an "It" to me if he becomes only an object of curiosity or perhaps regarded as a scientifically objective thing. The "I-It" attitude characterizes the epistemological subject-object polarity, if the subject regards the object from the perspective of his own centeredness only. But this knowledge relation may be superseded in the "I-Thou" relation. In this relation, a person becomes a "Thou" to me when I become directly related to him and treat him as a "centered self," that is, when I am aware of him as an individual

⁴⁵S. Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript trans. David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 181.

⁴⁶Martin Buber, I and Thou trans. Ronald G. Smith, (Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1937), and Between Man and Man trans. R.G. Smith, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955).

person, and when there is mutuality or reciprocity between us. "I-It" relations are necessary in many relations, but the existential encounter of person and person, an "I-Thou" relation, is often regarded as the more rewarding. A person who only knows I-It relations and does not enter into I-Thou relations, Buber considers, is excluded from a fully human existence. "All real living is meeting."⁴⁷ Talk of the I-Thou relation refers paradigmatically to the encounter between the human person and his ultimate concern (God), but much more often, it refers to an intimate relation of person to person. While the encounter of one person with another may be an I-It relation, man's relation to God can never be an I-It relation, that is, God can never be "object."

At the other end of the scale, Karl Barth denies any theological significance to the subject-object dichotomy because of his assertions that God is "indissolubly Subject" and "the Subject which is never Object."⁴⁸ In Emil Brunner's account of the divine-human encounter we are informed that although psychology can comprehend dislocations in the self, only theology can speak of its unity. The I-It relation, then, precludes a personal encounter between the self and God.⁴⁹

Tillich, it seems, tried to take what he hoped to be a more liberal and balanced view than Barth's or Brunner's. He asserts that

⁴⁷ M. Buber, Between Man and Man, ibid., p. 22.

⁴⁸ James Brown, Kierkegaard, Buber and Barth (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 15. See also Chapter VI.

⁴⁹ Emil Brunner, Truth as Encounter (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), pp. 111-118.

"the theologian cannot escape making God an object in the logical sense of the word," but that "God remains the subject, even if he becomes the logical object."⁵⁰ Tillich considers that the subject-object relation must be transcended without, however, its being destroyed. It would seem, that for Buber, on the other hand, the subject-object relation has to be destroyed before God can be encountered.⁵¹ For Tillich, the whole of epistemology is:

a cognitive attempt to bridge the split by showing the ultimate unity of subject and object, either by annihilating one side of the gap for the sake of the other, or by establishing a uniting principle which contains them both.⁵²

Under the conditions of existence, the gap cannot, it appears, be closed. Some have tried to escape these conditions by transcending the split in mystical unity and seeking truth, that goal which can only be achieved by the mystical conquest of the subject-object relation.⁵³ Others, more realistically minded, seek to bridge the gap by receiving the object in the form of words, concepts and images into the self, but this effort has met with little success.

The postulation or admission of the subject-object dichotomy by traditional theologians is cited by Tillich as one of the reasons why the God of what he calls theological theism, is unacceptable to him. Any God worthy of that status must, of course, transcend all the conditions and ambiguities of human existence, of which the most

⁵⁰S.T., I., p. 172.

⁵¹Cf. Buber, I and Thou, op. cit., pp. 8-13.

⁵²S.T., III., p. 70.

⁵³S.T., III., p. 71.

crucial, as we have already asserted, is that dominant fundamental, the subject-object relation. God must be beyond this relation. Tillich very clearly sets out his case and it is worth stating here.

The God of theological theism is a being beside others and as such a part of the whole of reality. He certainly is considered its most important part, but as a part and therefore as subjected to the structure of the whole. He is supposed to be beyond the ontological elements and categories which constitute reality. But every statement subjects him to them. He is seen as a self which has a world, as an ego which is related to a thou, as a cause which is separated from its effect, as having a definite space and an endless time. He is a being, not being-itself. As such he is bound to the subject-object structure of reality, he is an object for us as subjects. At the same time we are objects for him as a subject. And this is decisive for the necessity of transcending theological theism.⁵⁴

Of course this is not all there is to be said, but the latter point could strike Tillich as already being a very forceful argument for the rejection of this type of God.⁵⁵ For, with an all-powerful God, who is able to become the subject for "poor mortals," a more intolerable situation arises. Tillich's next words represent an even more forceful argument.

For God as a subject makes me into an object which is nothing more than an object. He deprives me of my subjectivity because he is all-powerful and all-knowing. I revolt and try to make him into an object, but the revolt fails and becomes desperate. God appears as an invincible tyrant, the being in contrast with whom all other beings are without freedom and subjectivity. He is equated with the recent tyrants who with the help

⁵⁴C.B., pp. 184-185.

⁵⁵The whole question of Divine Projection and Divine limitation could be raised here. See, for example, Frederick Sontag, Divine Perfection (New York: Harper & Bros, 1962) especially p. 19 and Frederick B. Fitch, "The Perfection of Perfection" in Process and Divinity ed. W.L. Reese and E. Heemer, (Ill. La Salle: Open Court Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 529-532.

of terror try to transform everything into a mere object, a thing among things, a cog in the machine they control. He becomes the model of everything against which Existentialism revolted. This is the God Nietzsche said had to be killed because nobody can tolerate being made into a mere object of absolute knowledge and absolute control.⁵⁶

This God is superseded by what Tillich has called, "the God above the God of theism," and it is this type of Deity who transcends the subject-object dichotomy. This "God above God" can be equated with Being-itself. Theism in all its forms must be transcended if what Tillich terms absolute faith can operate. One of the attributes of absolute faith is the "accepting of the acceptance without somebody or something that accepts."⁵⁷

It is arguable whether there is anything characterizable as the religious consciousness of man, as the basic religious aspiration, or as the main religious need of man. Perhaps it is better to say that man's more religious forms of consciousness, like man's more religious aspirations and needs, form a loose sort of family.⁵⁸

Which of these forms, aspirations and needs are better satisfied by Tillich's "God above the God of theism" than by the Deity of traditional theism had better be referred at the present stage of investigation to non-philosophical descriptive studies of comparative religion, or to the branch of psychological and sociological studies in religion. Worry about thinking of God as "a being among other beings"

⁵⁶ C.B., p. 185.

⁵⁷ C.B., p. 185.

⁵⁸ Cf. L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations op. cit., No. 66 and 67; Blue Book op. cit., pp. 17 & 20; Ninian Smart, Reasons and Faiths (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), p. 18 etc.; J. King-Farlow, op. cit., Chapter II.

may often result in confusing what one might call (1) Set-Inclusion "Amongness" and (2) Same-rank or Same-value or Same-level Amongness. Thus Babe Ruth was one baseball player among millions of other baseball players, but he was not (that is, not just) one baseball player among millions of others. Perhaps what seemed to a Spinoza or a Tillich to be insuperable theological (or philosophical) difficulties concerning the interpretation of talk about God's immanence and transcendence may be removable with the development of linguistic analysis and applied formal logic. Perhaps much concern about "subject-object dichotomies" will be relieved when philosophers and linguists clarify descriptively the meanings of "subject" and "object" or when philosophers and theologians have improved prescriptively the associated concepts or when both gains are made possible after future progress in all three fields. ("Object" like "thing" has certain pejorative uses and "subject" like "individual" has certain reverential ones. These uses may cloud many issues in philosophy and religion.) However, it might be suggested that for those who do feel a theological difficulty to arise when interpreting the divine as "a being among other beings" and the notion of making sense of a transcendent-immanent God the idea of a "God above the God of theism" may satisfy, temporarily at least, their uneasiness. But a religious desire for a close personal encounter between a divine personal being and a human being which so many men feel, may be more difficult to satisfy with Tillich's talk of "God above the God of theism" than with belief in the traditional God of theism.

In today's technologically oriented society, the subject-object cleavage under the control of technical reason is characterized

by observation and conclusion, for these are the ways the subject has to grasp the object. This entails a relatively detached situation. But when the degree of this very detached situation is to some extent overcome, participation replaces observation (though it may include observation) and insight replaces conclusions (though it may include conclusions).⁵⁹ The concept of participation which plays a key role in both Tillich's epistemology and his account of symbolic language is worthy of further study.

III. 2. c. Perception and the Structure of Knowledge.

What one may call human powers of sense-perception are thought of by Tillich as man's psychological receptivity in relation to his environment. In a broader sense, perception refers to one of the two poles of knowledge in general, namely, to the participating pole, as contrasted with the separating pole.⁶⁰ Perception involves the receiving of sensory stimuli, but also the organizing and interpretation of such stimuli, through the application and mediation of universal concepts and the elements of meaning. The participation involved in a "cognitive union" or "cognitive encounter," the separation involved in knowledge is the cognitive detachment whereby the subject "grasps" abstractly and conceptually the object in which it participates to some degree.

Thus in cognition, there is a dialectical unity of two contrasting and opposing elements, namely the participation of subject

⁵⁹ S.T., III., p. 256.

⁶⁰ S.T., I., p. 77.

and object, each in the other, and separation of the subject over against the object. This "unity of distance and union" or this "union through separation" is, says Tillich, the ontological problem of knowledge.

Knowing is a form of union. In every act of knowledge, the knower and that which is known are united; the gap between subject and object is overcome. The subject "grasps" the object, adapts it to itself, and at the same time, adapts itself to the object. But the union is a peculiar one; it is union through separation. Detachment is the condition of cognitive union.⁶¹

Participation, we see, implies an "openness," that is, the capacity of the subject and object to encounter, receive, accept, admit and unite with one another, or in Tillich's phraseology, "grasps" or "being a part of something from which one is, at the same time, separated."⁶²

Participation may mean "sharing," as in sharing some possession; in "having something in common" as in the participation of an individual in a universal, or "being a part of" as in the case of a society or group. However, from a sociological and/or theological point of view, what I take Tillich to mean by "openness" is the potentiality of receiving someone or something into one's own self, or on the other hand, of being accepted or admitted into some other self.⁶³ The

⁶¹ S.T., I., p. 94.

⁶² C.B., p. 88.

⁶³ Tillich appears to have a double usage of "self" which is not always apparent in his writings. On the one hand, "self" means what Tillich calls "self-relatedness" the immediately experienced I in such phrases as 'I think' or 'I am.' Tillich writes: "The question is not whether selves exist. The question is whether we are aware of self-relatedness" (S.T., I., p. 169). On the other hand, "self" refers to a kind of being, namely, a self-reflective being, a "structure of centeredness." In this sense, "self" is that kind of being in which all ontological dimensions are actualized.

actualization of the potentiality results in a mutual participating of subject and object in one another and this underlies their cognitive relation.

The phrases "mutual participating of subject and object" and "sharing some possessions" or "sharing in a group" are fraught with possible confusions because they are all so very wide. It seems that in order to clarify the whole murky situation of what may be called epistemological participation, we must clarify the meanings and interpretations of certain terms, especially "subject" and object." Then we must try as clearly as is possible to understand what we mean by the relation of a subject to an object.

For the subject of a sentence a great diversity of terms expressing concepts may be substituted. The subject may have a relation to essential being, (existence_1), existential being (existence_2), natural beings, material things, concepts of non-material "things," in fact, anything found or imagined in our universe, real or unreal, and divine persons. The object of a sentence may also be subsumed under any one of the categories mentioned.

It is clear that a large number of permutations and combinations using even the broad classes mentioned, is possible. However, it seems that, for the purpose in hand, namely the study of participation, we may, without causing confusion, reduce the number of categories that may be subsumed under either the subject or the object to three main divisions: divine persons, human persons,⁶⁴ and

⁶⁴I shall take as my definition of a human person that suggested by P.F. Strawson, Individuals (London: Methuen, 1959), p. 102. A person is an entity "such that both predicates ascribing states of

things.⁶⁵ Using this triadic system, we may reduce the number of kinds of participation (sharing) and separation (detachment) to four.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Thing and Thing | Participation ₁ (sharing ₁) |
| Human person and Thing | Participation ₂ (sharing ₂) |
| Human person and Human person | Participation ₃ (sharing ₃) |
| Human person and Divine person | Participation ₄ (sharing ₄) |

The corresponding suffixes will be attached to the terms "separation" and "detachment."

We may now consider some examples of sharing₁. These occur mainly in the inanimate world of scientific exploration, principally, it seems, under the heading of cause and effect. The force of gravity causes an object to fall, because the force of gravity participates₁ with the weight, causing movement. This type of participation has really little theological significance, and hence Tillich does not pay a great deal of attention to it. However, he does instance the case in which "an individual leaf participates in the natural

consciousness and predicates ascribing corporeal characteristics, a physical situation, etc., are equally applicable to a single individual of that single type." R. Puccetti, Persons (London: MacMillan, 1968), writes: Two kinds of predicates are applicable to persons: "the first kind he calls 'M-predicates,' which are predicates applied to persons and to material bodies as well: that is, to things to which we do not ascribe conscious states. The second kind Strawson calls 'P-predicates' and these include all the other predicates we apply to persons, some of which describe behaviour, others less so or not at all. But every P-predicate implies the possession of consciousness, even if not ascribing a particular state of consciousness to the subject: this is what marks off P-predicates from M-predicates" (p. 2).

⁶⁵ See above. I shall use the term "thing" to cover "all things in heaven and earth and under the earth" excepting only persons, human and divine.

structures and forces which act upon it"⁶⁶ and also the participation of a particular in a universal.⁶⁷

The basis of participation₂ is, for Tillich, the basic ontological structure, the self-world polarity, (recalling that, for our purpose, we are excluding the category "person" from the category "world"). Examples of participation₂ or detachment₂ are numerous. The scientist in all his experimental work is involved in participation₂, though it might be more profitable to consider scientific experimental work as examples of detachment₂ rather than participation.₂ The scientist is occupied in what is sometimes called the objective method: that is, he may think reasonably and pragmatically about the object he has observed, or with which he is dealing, but he must detach₂ himself as completely as possible from the object of the experiment. He must, as far as is humanly possible, not allow his feelings or emotions to cloud his logical rigour. For Tillich, this is what is meant by man's technical reason, or objective reason or reflective-rational reason,⁶⁸ which attempts to wrest from nature, its secrets. The knowledge gained in this way is called, by Tillich, controlling knowledge.⁶⁹

Though the wealth of controlling knowledge, gathered using

⁶⁶ S.T., I., p. 176.

⁶⁷ S.T., I., p. 178.

⁶⁸ See n. 37 in this chapter.

⁶⁹ See Section III. 2. d. See also S.T., I., p. 22. This kind of knowledge is called "knowledge of control or achievement" by Max Scheler, in Philosophical Perspectives (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 42.

technical reason, is obtained under the dimension which we have designated participation₂, there are many cases of participation₂ which have philosophical and theological import. The relation between man and any inanimate object would fall into this class, for example, the relation of man to any of the non-personal symbols. The study of man himself as a mere physical object would require detachment₂ or objectivity which would place this kind of experiment or project in the division called participation₂. This latter relation, namely man and "mere object impersonal" man, is characterized by one or more of the following qualities; detachment, manipulation and generalization. Detachment implies the removal or a serious attempt at removal, of all feelings, emotions and attitudes which are sometimes called "subjective," thus reducing to a minimum involvement or sharing or participation of any kind. Manipulation obviously refers to "using" the other person for one's own ends without reference to, or consideration for the object's feelings. Generalization means that the object (person) is considered, after predication of certain marks, traits and characteristics, as an object of a certain class (in this case, man) to be manipulated for the purpose of the experiment in hand. In other words, the object is just considered a member (almost inanimate) of a class of universals. Tillich, as might be expected, inveighs vehemently against this latter type of participation₂.⁷⁰

In Tillich's writings, cases of participation₃ or sharing₃ are probably more abundant than any of the other categories of

⁷⁰ See Peter Homans, "Transference and Transcendence" Journal of Religion, XLVI, Part II, 1966, 156-157.

participation. He recounts the sharing₃ of the knower and the known (if the known is acting as a person in his own right), the lover and his beloved, in fact, any instance involving social intercourse between two persons, or whenever mind meets mind. We have already referred to the "I-It" and "I-Thou" relations and these terms are called, by Buber, "primary words."

Though there are similarities between the ways in which Buber and Tillich use these "I-It" and "I-Thou" relations, there are a number of basic differences. As we have mentioned already, in both the writings of Tillich and Buber, we may say that the "I-It" relation in general refers to that relation in which the object of the subject-object dichotomy is regarded as a thing which is or may be manipulated, controlled, used and compared with other things. The basic notion of the "I-Thou" relation is that relation which occurs between two persons when each person is acting as an individual mind. But having said this, the differences between the ways in which these two concepts are used by Tillich and Buber are striking.

Considering now the "I-Thou" relation exclusively, we note that Buber envisions the "I-Thou" relation as including certain relationships with the physical-vital world of nature. A case in point is the "I-Thou" relation Buber sees between a person and a tree:

It can, however, also come about, if I have both will and grace, that in considering the tree I become bound up in relation to it. The tree is now no longer It. It has been seized by the power of exclusiveness.⁷¹

⁷¹Buber, I and Thou, op. cit., p. 7. Though I feel that Tillich would not go along with Buber on this point, he seems to have a rich even mystical or symbolic romantic sense for a person's relation to the world of nature. See Tillich, "Nature and Sacrament," P.E., pp. 94-112, especially pp. 99-103.

Karl Barth and Emil Brunner do not accept this kind of relation in the "I-Thou" category, since they view this kind of relation as existing only between two persons.⁷² I think Tillich would, in general, agree with Barth's interpretation that the "I-Thou" relation is paradigmatically a relation between persons, but would not agree with Barth that this relation occurs only between persons.

For Tillich, any interpersonal relation among men (i.e. participation₃), that is existent₂ beings, prevails under the shadow of the finitude and estrangement which are part of the conditions of human existence₁. This dissipates the impact of what is called "participation" (using the word in its full or ideal sense) in such a relationship. However, it is still participation, that is, to the best of man's finite ability. If one were to question the suitability of the word "participation" in the case of participation₃ it would be difficult to apply it in cases of what we have termed "participation₂" and "participation₁," relationships in which any kind of meaningful mutuality appears absent, despite Buber's illustration involving a tree. Buber seems to recognize the importance of this, since he asks the question: "If the I-Thou relationship requires a mutual action which

⁷² K. Barth, Church Dogmatics trans. G.T. Thomson and Harold Knight, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1956), I., Part 2, 42: "The place in the cosmos in which objectivity is announced to us, in which we can no longer say It, and therefore no longer I, but only Thou, and in which we alone can ultimately recognize ourselves in this particular way, is the human countenance." See also Emil Brunner, The Divine-Human Encounter (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1943), p. 51 and 67: "As a matter of fact, it is precisely in God's giving himself to be known and in this knowledge of God that the essence of the relation between God and man lies.... The revelation of God to men is the decisive element in what God does for them. For the Word is the way in which mind communicates with mind, subject with object, will with will."

embraces both the I and the Thou, how may the relation of something in nature be understood in such a relationship?"⁷³ Buber's answer to this question is that "speech in its ontological sense was at all times present whenever men regarded one another in the mutuality of I and Thou."⁷⁴ Since the tree cannot speak, it is suggested that "God speaks to man in the things and beings whom he sends him in life."⁷⁵ Now whether we accept Buber's "explanation" as satisfactory or not, need not concern us here, except to say that Buber does say that "clearly there is no unified answer to this question."⁷⁶

In the case of participation,₄ it is notable that contemporary theologians, such as Barth and Tillich, emphasize that God is to be regarded as a living God, that is, a God not only of spirit but of power.⁷⁷ Buber emphasizes the divine power and vitality, but at the same time, with Barth and against Tillich, he wants to say that God

⁷³Buber, I and Thou, op. cit., p. 125. It should be noted that the book I and Thou was first published in English about 1937, but in the second edition Buber added a postscript; pp. 123-137 and dated it 1957. The second edition was published in 1958.

⁷⁴Martin Buber, The Knowledge of Man: Selected Essays. ed. Maurice Friedman, trans. Maurice Friedman and Ronald Gregor Smith, (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 106.

⁷⁵Martin Buber, Mamre: Essays in Religion, trans. Greta Hort (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1946), p. 103. Cf. ibid, p. 4: "God's act of creation is speech; but also each lived moment is so. The world is spoken to the human beings who perceive it, and the life of man is itself a dialogue."

⁷⁶Buber, I and Thou, op. cit., p. 125.

⁷⁷K. Barth, Church Dogmatics ed. G.W. Bromley and T.F. Torrance, (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1957), II, 2, 267: "If God has no nature, if He is that chemically distilled absolute spirit, He does nothing, and in fact he can do nothing.... Acts happen only in the unity of spirit and nature."

is personal.⁷⁸ Tillich rejects the notion that God is a person, partially on the grounds that a person, even a divine person, is merely one being among others and partly because he regards God as the infinitely dynamic Ground of Being.⁷⁹

Both Tillich and Buber would agree, I think, that "all real living is meeting," and that one can know God only in a "I-Thou" relation. Buber considers that normally one's encounter with God takes place in and through one's encounters with finite Thous: "Every particular Thou is a glimpse through to the eternal Thou; by means of every particular Thou the primary word addresses the eternal Thou."⁸⁰ We must not assume that this means that "God" is but a name for the sum of personal relationships, since, for Buber, God is transcendent to all finite Thous. But, even as the "wholly other," he is "nearer to me than my I."⁸¹ Buber is critical of the mystical experience which lifts one in ecstasy out of everyday life into some life beyond since he says that "I possess nothing but the everyday out of which I am never taken."⁸² Buber asserts that the "I" need not escape from this world to contact God since he can meet Him as the "eternal Thou" in every finite and temporal Thou.

Buber, then, does not require the two separate classes of participation₃ and participation₄. For him, the "purity" of an "I-Thou"

⁷⁸Buber, I and Thou, op. cit., p. 135.

⁷⁹S.T., I., pp. 241ff.

⁸⁰Buber, I and Thou, op. cit., p. 75.

⁸¹Buber, I and Thou, op. cit., p. 79.

⁸²M. Buber, Between Man and Man, op. cit., p. 14.

relation between persons (human existent₂ persons) is the same as the "purity" of the "I-Thou" relation in a divine-human encounter. The relevance of human finitude for Buber lies in the fact that "every Thou in the world is fated by its nature to become a thing, or continually to re-enter into the condition of things,"⁸³ but the "Eternal Thou can by its nature not become It."⁸⁴ Buber distinguishes three spheres in which the "I-Thou" relation arises, but it is clear that these are really the same basic relation in each case.⁸⁵ Now while both Buber and Tillich indicate that human finitude requires a distinction to be made between a person-person encounter and a person-God encounter, Buber does not think that the requirement is met by drawing a systematic distinction between these kinds of relation. On the other hand, Tillich does require that these types of relation be very clearly distinguished, and this is the reason why we have suggested the two divisions in our scheme of classification of the "I-Thou" relation. It is, I suspect, against Buber's notion that God and man might be regarded as equal partners in a conversation that Tillich writes: "If it (speaking to God) is brought down to the level of a conversation between two beings, it is blasphemous and ridiculous."⁸⁶

For Tillich all encounters or participations of type 4 also occur under what Tillich calls "the conditions of existence." Behind this phrase lurks a possible confusion. The inter-personal

⁸³M. Buber, I and Thou, op. cit., p. 17.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 112.

⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 3-6

⁸⁶S.T., I., p. 127.

relationships among human beings, that is existent₂ beings, take place in the "shadow" of finitude and estrangement, which are part of the conditions of human existence. This must limit the application of the name "participation" to any person to person relation. In any encounter (whether between human beings or between a person and God) the ontological element "individualization and participation" becomes outstandingly important. Under the polarity of this polar concept, and under the conditions of existence, the "individuality" pole in a person (but, of course, not in God) always appears to play the dominant role since egoism seems to be a human failing. This sets up an increased inner tension and the force of the role of participation is reduced, since in a polar concept a balance must be retained. In any case, the pole "participation" is limited by the other pole and hence participation from the human angle can never be anything approaching perfection, that is, the type of perfection which occurs in the unlimited participation of God in his creatures.

So Tillich would want to say that the human encounter between persons is quite different from the divine-human type of encounter. Buber does not seem to want to place any type of restriction on the quality of participation, but Tillich's polar concepts do restrict the quality and "quantity" of participation. Both, however, seem to see the possibility of the divine-human encounter as a transcending of the subject-object dichotomy. Though Tillich might agree that "every particular Thou" is able to give us a glimpse of the eternal Thou, he would want to place certain restrictions or qualifications on this notion. Provided that that particular Thou was acting as a symbol, and provided that that symbol was transparent to the divine, (and

only Jesus as the Christ could be the perfect example) there might be a chance that such a symbol could provide such a glimpse.

For Tillich, all instances of revelation would be accepted into the class of participation. The answer to estrangement must be at once pertinent to the actual situation of existence in which the question of existence is continually asked. It must be really an answer, coming from existent man and beyond all rational expectation, re-uniting him with his essential being, the potential ought-to-be from which he has fallen, but from which he is not entirely removed. Revelation is an answer given in, or mediated by, human experience. It is man's living participation₄ in the Ground of being, in Being-itself. This answer of revelation is beyond the dichotomy of subject and object, beyond the split between essence and existence; it is the manifestation of his ultimate concern. In this experience, man though in a fallen, sinful state, is accepted. He comes to recognize that the threat of non-being is no threat to the Ground of being in which he participates. Revelation, as the manifestation of our ultimate concern, requires a vehicle in and through which the mystery of being may appear. As Tillich says, "There is no reality, thing, or event which cannot become a bearer of the mystery of being and enter into a revelatory correlation."⁸⁷

Man as living is the image, or analogue of the Triune God. He is this by participation₄. He participates₄ in the dynamic power of being, and in the divine Logos, in the power of meaning. Man's participation in the "abyss" element of God, or of Being-itself, is

⁸⁷ S.T., I., p. 118.

the power of being in him, his "depth" which resists all conceptualization. It is that in him which is experienced as ultimate concern, his point of unity with that from which he is separated.

It is interesting to remark at this juncture on the polarity which is evidenced in participation of whatever type and separation of whatever type. It is very apparent that in the cases of participation₁ and participation₂, the pole of separation in both cases reaches its maximum importance, and the pole of participation in both cases exerts its minimum influence. However, in the case of participation₃, the pole of participation is now of more importance, though the pole of separation retains considerable power. The aim in the case of participation₄, for example in any I-Thou relation, is to reduce the pole of separation to its very minimum, while the other pole, participation, should take on its maximum power. The ideal case would occur when the pole of separation entirely disappeared. But, of course, the pole of participation would also disappear, and we should have a case of complete union with the divine.

We can agree with Tillich when he points out that "in all cases, participation is a partial identity and a partial non-identity."⁸⁸ This frame of partial identity seems to be the categorial setting of the knowledge relation. The frame of partial identity is the substantial matrix which unites subject and object despite their "beside-each-otherness" in space, and despite the causally oriented changes in the cognitive encounter through time. Tillich says that the category of both "thinghood" and "underlying identity" is

⁸⁸C.B., p. 88.

"substance," which is "literally that which underlies a process of becoming and gives it its unity, making it into a definite, relatively lasting thing."⁸⁹ So we see that, in the realm of knowledge, the important category of partial identity is expressed by Tillich's odd use of the word "substance." For Tillich, substance is composed of the total culture or the historical period, for "if a history-creating situation is called a substance, this means that there is a point of identity in all its manifestations."⁹⁰ Substance, then, for Tillich, is that which underlies the phenomena of our whole historical structure or culture. And it is only in such a cultural context that one finds language and the universal concepts which are included in language. All knowledge, whether it be knowledge of physical nature or not, is mediated through the language and universals of that culture.

Man's participation in nature is direct, insofar as he is a definite part of nature through his bodily existence. His participation in nature is indirect and mediated through the community insofar as he transcends nature by knowing and shaping it. Without language there are no universals; without universals no transcending of nature and no relation to it as nature. But language is communal, not individual.⁹¹

It would appear that the base, partial identity, is the foundation of all cognitive participation in any culture. And within any given culture, it is language, with its concepts and meanings, which brings to light the intelligible relations of the inhabitants.

Belief in this element of separation (in general) within the

⁸⁹ S.T., III., pp. 314 and 321; see also S.T., I., p. 197.

⁹⁰ S.T., III., p. 325.

⁹¹ T.C., p. 91.

structure of partial identity clearly supposes the distinct individuality of each thing or each person with subjective reason.⁹² This distinctiveness (individualization) makes an opposite demand from that made by participation (in general). The openness of subject and object seen in participation is replaced by an ability of the subject to detach itself in what might be termed cognitive separation. Without this power of separation, the subject, as a centered self, (in the cases of participation₂ and participation₃) could not act opposite to other things or universals. However, while the individual can "absorb" the entire world of objects, he is unable to "conquer" another person without destroying that personality. So, in the case of another self, another personality, the dynamics of that other self makes it into an elusive prey, "an ever escaping object,"⁹³ as Tillich calls it. But in the case of material objects, the human subject is ever rising above (transcending) the frame of partial identity, and seizes and manipulates these material things as he wills. When he is able to manipulate and use the ideas or universals obtained through participation₂ (with the assistance of participation₁) then he can appreciate the use of concepts and avail himself of their power.

"Cognition tries to reach the essence of an object or a process by abstraction from the many particulars in which the essence is present...

⁹²One of the pairs of ontological elements is Participation and Individualization. The other pairs are Dynamics and Form: and Freedom and Destiny. S.T., I., pp. 174-178. See also this study Chapter VI, Section 7.

⁹³S.T., III., p. 254.

But every concept is an abstraction."⁹⁴

The two elements within the structure of knowledge, as we have seen, are participation and separation. It is only when this structure is brought into actual effect, that these two alternating moments or determining influences appear. That moment which predominates in participation may be termed the perceptive moment, while the moment predominantly appearing in separation is the cognitive moment.⁹⁵

Every act of perceiving is a reception of the object into the subject, for, in the empirical sciences particularly, knowledge means (partially) taking in what is given through the senses. But the object is taken as what it really is, through the senses (hence per-ception), and it is this perception which is accepted by the cognitive self, which having taken in the form, is thereby in-formed. However, it seems that the use, by Tillich, of the word "perception" is somewhat erratic. Sometimes he appears to mean "sense perception."⁹⁶

Sense perception is, in the psychological dimension, the way in which persons react to or receive things or other persons through the means of a stimulus-response.⁹⁷ One cannot, then, identify sense perception with what has been called the perceptive moment which predominates in ontic participation. For the perceptive moment or perceptive determining influence also predominates within the nonempirical intuition of the presuppositions of cognition, within both the existential and

⁹⁴ S.T., I., pp. 70f.

⁹⁵ Cf. S.T., I., pp. 170f.

⁹⁶ Cf. S.T., III., pp. 37 and 62; D.F., pp. 33f.

⁹⁷ S.T., I., p. 62.

religious awareness. Thus Tillich has broadened the use of the term "perception" to include, not just the empirical scientific aspect, but also a type of intuitive awareness and insight leading to receptivity.⁹⁸

Reviewing what has been said, we may recall that in reason there is a relatively passive receptive function and a relatively active grasping function. Perception is seen as the receptive aspect, and conception or cognition as the grasping aspect. Further, in the broadest sense, participation₂ out of which man's cognitive act appears, is seen to be a combination of two distinct acts. Firstly it is seen as a sensory (physical) reaction to and interaction with the environment. Secondly, participation₂ and participation₃ become a cognitive act through the transformation of sensory stimuli into distinctively human and personal awareness: the person, so to speak, accommodates the stimuli within that universe of meaning into which language has transformed reality. Cognition is the abstract grasp of what is perceived in both the dimensions of sensory stimulation and conceptual accommodation. For Tillich,

... the meaning-creating power of the word depends on the different ways in which the mind encounters reality... the inherent ambiguity of language is that in transferring reality into meaning, it separates mind from reality.⁹⁹

We have already decided to break down the concept of participation into four distinct groups. However, these groups are not to be

⁹⁸ Martin Heidegger, Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics, trans. James S. Churchill, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), p. 31, quoted by Tillich, T.C., p. 98.

⁹⁹ S.T., III., p. 69.

regarded as mutually exclusive for, it seems, that in any instance of participation₃, both participation₁ and participation₂ will play a part. Before any communication, understanding and dialogue can occur in the case of participation₃, the sense organs of each individual will receive certain stimuli to which they can eventually respond (participation₁). Each mind is embodied in a body, a thing, and hence participation₂ will also be partially involved. Only in participation₄ is participation₁, participation₂ and sense perception completely ruled out.

III. 2. d. Realms of Knowledge.

Both participation and separation, both abstract cognition and the sorts of physical events or processes usually associated with "sense-perception" are connected by Tillich, (wisely or unwisely), with all examples of knowledge.¹⁰⁰ Such a connection may seem more illuminating in the examples of Kant's paradigmatic synthetic a-posteriori cases of knowledge than in the cases of a-priori knowledge.¹⁰¹ My knowledge that the extended thing is red savours more of Tillichian participation than my knowledge that this and every red thing is extended.

The polarity of participation and separation differs according to the disparate tendencies within different human disciplines. That form of knowledge which is dominated by the pole of detachment is termed, by Tillich, "controlling knowledge." That form of

¹⁰⁰ S.T., I., p. 97.

¹⁰¹ I. Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, trans. Norman K. Smith, (London: MacMillan, 1952), Introduction, B2, p. 25.

knowledge which stresses participation (participation₃) or union, is called, by Tillich, "receiving or existential knowledge." Though controlling knowledge stresses detachment, and receiving knowledge stresses participation, Tillich does not mean to suggest that there is any strict dichotomy here. In fact, he states that the "unity of union and detachment is precisely described by the term 'understanding.'" ¹⁰² Understanding a person, a scientific experiment, or a scientific fact, law or theory, or understanding what is read or spoken, is for Tillich an "amalgamation of controlling and receiving knowledge, of union and detachment." ¹⁰³ Thus it seems that Tillich is using the term "understanding" more or less in the flexible way it is used in ordinary or everyday language. But this link with flexible usage of "understanding" may speak ill for Tillich's belief that he is using "knowledge" more rigorously and clearheadedly than we do in everyday language.

Controlling knowledge is knowledge obtained mainly by the mathematical sciences and other scientific pursuits based on the scientific method. The outstanding example of controlling knowledge is that of the technical reason. It is involved with the "superficial" aspects of reality, making every effort to control that reality. But controlling knowledge is not just limited to scientific knowledge but claims control at every level of reality. Whether we are considering personality, life, community, meanings, values or even our

¹⁰² S.T., I., p. 98.

¹⁰³ S.T., I., p. 98.

ultimate concern, we should be able to sit back and view these terms or concepts in a detached manner, analyzing them and yet sharing₂ in them.

Controlling knowledge is also termed "objective knowledge" and is that form of knowledge which can be "verified by the success of controlling actions,"¹⁰⁴ that is, by experiment. It has as its most impressive verification the many uses of technical knowledge seen in the world today. The public are so impregnated with the demands and the astonishing results of this type of knowledge, that they tend to view any other type of knowledge (for example, that called by Tillich receiving knowledge) with distrust. They hardly realize that controlling knowledge which unites subject and object in order that the subject can control the object deprives objects of their subjective qualities and so transforms them into "calculable" things.¹⁰⁵ So man himself tends to become a cog in the cognitive dehumanization which is the consequence of the exclusive use and conditioning by controlling knowledge.

Receiving or existential knowledge involves the attitudes and emotions of a person whose body interacts with other physical things in sharing₂ or participation₂, or with the attitudes or emotions of the object as in sharing₃ or participation₃. The subject and object become conjoined or at least very closely associated by virtue of the perceiver's feelings and attitudes, for "no union of subject and

¹⁰⁴ S.T., I., p. 97.

¹⁰⁵ S.T., I., p. 98.

object is possible without emotional participation" since "emotion is the vehicle for receiving cognition."¹⁰⁶ But even so, the content is rational, and as such must be considered with critical caution and "verification" may be required.¹⁰⁷ This psychological rather than physiological association may occur, of course, in differing degrees. On the one hand, the epistemological object may evoke the strength of feelings characteristic of human feelings about those persons who are of most (or very) special interest. On the other hand, it may evoke those vague, indifferent attitudes that are not really attitudes characteristic of human feelings about those things that are of no special interest. Should the subject become very "close" to the object then we should consider the association covered by the term friendship, in the Aristotelean sense.¹⁰⁸ Should the friendship become more intense, we should term it love. In the limiting case, where the subject and object completely coalesce (that is the subject and object would be completely one) the subject-object structure would be completely transcended. Tillich refers to this final stage as "receiving knowledge in its fulfilment,"¹⁰⁹ and though very highly improbable in human existence (existence₂), Tillich considers that it

¹⁰⁶ S.T., I., p. 98.

¹⁰⁷ It is necessary to issue a warning here concerning Tillich's use of the term "verification." While today it is usual to verify empirical assertions, statements etc., and justify emotive assertions, Tillich appears to use "verification" in both cases. We shall deal with this matter later.

¹⁰⁸ Aristotle, On Friendship ed. Geoffrey Percival, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), 1159a 12-21.

¹⁰⁹ S.T., I., p. 100.

is logically possible. He instances the case when the object (a human person) is united, fragmentarily, with the Ground of being in revelation.¹¹⁰ If the subject-object relation is completely transcended, then Tillich is correct in claiming that "receiving knowledge in its fulfilment" satisfies the "demands of controlling knowledge."

When the subject-object relation is transcended by overwhelming any of the forms of separation by any of the forms of participation, the frame of partial identity is naturally superseded by a frame of total identity. In the religious sphere, this may be termed the goal of salvation. The naive Christian's pluralist view of salvation as a kind of prize-winning transaction between separate beings can be replaced by more monistic conceptions: salvation is more like the realization that separateness is superficial, that love and holiness once achieved, reveal the fundamental identity or oneness of all superficially separate beings as grounded in Being-itself. However, the absence of one pole in any polar relation just simply means that the whole relation within that polarity collapses. Paradigmatic knowledge always involves separation of one type or another, and if this pole disappears, paradigmatic knowledge must disappear also. But under the conditions of existence₂, the basic presuppositions of the ontological question (namely, an asking subject and an object about which the question is asked) can never be falsified. In other words, the pole, controlling knowledge (and its relative detachment) must

¹¹⁰ S.T., II., p. 166; S.T., III., p. 140. We might remind ourselves that we could be back in the "dreaming innocence" stage. S.T., III., p. 129. This kind of transcendent union, Tillich calls the quality of unambiguous life. S.T., III., Part IV, IC, pp. 107-137.

always be present, however slight in degree, at least under the conditions of personal existence (existence₂). Some mystics might, of course, happily reply to Tillich that in mystical union with the Ground of Being, either separate personhood and/or paradigmatic knowledge or knowing drop out altogether. And so much the worse for Tillich's seriousness about both his ontology and epistemology. However, Tillich seems to be aware of this possible attempt to refute his ideas. He comments at length about the uses and abuses of mysticism.¹¹¹

Controlling knowledge, we have seen, involves separation₁ or separation₂ and is that type of knowledge obtained through the use of technical reason. It is characterized by an attitude of detachment and cold analysis, and its findings are verified chiefly by experiment and Tillich agrees when he remarks that the "safest test is the repeatable experiment."¹¹²

Receiving knowledge, despite the magnificent and far-reaching results obtained through controlling knowledge, surprisingly enough, seems to occupy the greater part of the knowledge field. Receiving knowledge involves participation₂ and/or participation₃ and always includes the emotional aspect. It is characterized by an attitude of union and friendly warmth, and the "verification" of this type of knowledge is termed by Tillich as experiential verification. "By far the largest part of all cognitive verification is experiential,"¹¹³

¹¹¹S.T., I., p. 140f.

¹¹²S.T., I., p. 102.

¹¹³Ibid.

that is, verified in experience in life. "This test, of course, is neither repeatable, precise, nor final at any particular moment."¹¹⁴ Because receiving knowledge is the gate to metaphysical truth, it always entails a risk and is always accompanied by uncertainty.

The search for absolute knowledge using both controlling and receiving knowledge, finally ends in a dilemma which "mirrors a basic conflict in cognitive reason."¹¹⁵ Because the polarity of knowledge cannot be deleted under the conditions of human existence, we shall never obtain certainty about metaphysical truth.

So the search for absolute truth through the ordinary means of cognition available to us, seems to depress Tillich as his forlorn final comment indicates.

Knowledge stands in a dilemma; controlling knowledge is safe but not ultimately significant; while receiving knowledge is ultimately significant, but it cannot give certainty.¹¹⁶

III. 2. e. Religious Knowledge.

Religious knowledge belongs, principally, to the sphere of existential or receiving knowledge. Certain sections of religious knowledge, the factual parts capable of verification in some sense of verification, would, of course, be more properly classed under controlling knowledge. But for the most part, religious knowledge forms part of receiving knowledge which is regarded as the cognition which accompanied man's more complete and existential reception of "objects" into

¹¹⁴ S.T., I., p. 103.

¹¹⁵ S.T., I., p. 105.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

union with the self.¹¹⁷ This form of knowledge is closely associated with emotion which, says Tillich, is "the vehicle for receiving cognition... No union of subject and object is possible without emotional participation."¹¹⁸

Emotion is one of the poles of the polar structure form-emotion, in which form is the objective pole and hence the self-separating moment of a being's self-actualization, and emotion is the awareness of the power (i.e. the dynamics) of the richness of one's self-identity.¹¹⁹ Emotion may be regarded as that "position" within one's self from which one commences the self-transcending movement, and into which one returns, the whole being accompanied by the dynamics which is appropriate to the frame of partial identity. To understand the highly dialectical nature of participation, especially participation₃, it will be found more convenient to think in terms of power rather than in terms of (material) things. For example, if we consider a case of participation₃ that is, a case in which a subject is participating₃ in another self, the frame of partial identity is much better considered in terms of dynamics, that is, of power, than considering the other self as just an object, a thing, without any emotional contact. If this is not done, then the case of participation becomes a

¹¹⁷Being a self, Tillich says, means being separated in some way from everything else, having everything else opposite one's self, being able to look at it and act upon it. (S.T., I., p. 170). In order to know a thing, one must 'look' at a thing, and, in order to look at a thing, one must be "at a distance." (S.T., I., p. 94), cf. L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, op. cit., para. 66.

¹¹⁸S.T., I., p. 98.

¹¹⁹S.T., I., pp. 83, 39-94. This ontological element usually has the polar structure form-dynamics. Dynamics is not emotion, but on Tillich's terms, the two are closely related.

case of participation₂. In any case of participation₃ (self-self) no union is possible without the power of emotional impact. The term "power" must not be given the connotation of "power over" or "control over" as this would put the knowledge gained in the class of controlling knowledge. But receiving knowledge requires that sort of power which comes from the "power" of personal communication and sharing of ideas.¹²⁰

The most pressing problems in connection with religious knowledge or with religious language arise from clusters of philosophical questions about the meaning (Sense and Reference) and the meaningfulness (genuine intelligibility) of characteristic words like "God," "transcend," "Ground," etc., in religious discourse. So a consideration of what Tillich means by "meaning" would be relevant at this point.

It cannot be denied that a correspondence exists between the human spirit and reality, which is probably best expressed in the concept of "Meaning" and which led Hegel to talk of the unity of the objective with the subjective in the absolute spirit.¹²¹

Meaning, then, is the correspondence -- indeed it is the "co-responsiveness" -- between the opened-up constituents in man's self-actualization. That is, it is the realization of their belonging to and being meant for one another. Tillich argues that spiritual life (and indeed all life) is a striving towards the reunion of things which, though now separated, belong essentially to one another. We have already seen that in cognition, for example, subject and object are

¹²⁰Cf. C.B., pp. 88f.

¹²¹I.H., p. 61.

re-united in that the subject recognizes itself in the object, and also recognizes that the object belongs to the self.¹²²

From Tillich's quasi-Hegelian standpoint, and his allusion to the absolute spirit, meaning becomes the experienced coming-to-unity of the pure rational validity of the sign or symbol on the one hand, and the concrete givenness or dynamics on the other. These dynamics are the "matter," an ultimate principle of Greek philosophy,¹²³ which is creatively formed both within the cognitive "space" of man's meaningful consciousness and within the literal "space" of the cultural-environmental complex. For Spirit is the synthesis of formal "thought" and concrete "being." The thought of the purely rational comes into unity with the concrete givenness of the environment. And the dynamics becomes, then, the objectively valid contents which man's awareness grasps and which may be shaped in his socio-cultural existence. Man's whole being, his understanding, and his recognition of reality are constantly and intimately bound up with both meanings and values. This suggests that there are two constituents within the experience of meaning at which we might take a further look. These two constituents may be termed the conditional and the unconditional elements.

The conditional element is always within the subject-object structure involving specific contents of controlling and receiving knowledge and the broader implications or cultural connections between such contents. There is a vague consciousness of a system of

¹²²Tillich, P., "Estrangement and Reconciliation in Modern Thought" Review of Religion, IX (Nov. 1944), 5-19.

¹²³S.T., I., p. 179.

meanings, for according to Tillich, meaning is always a system of meanings. Each individual meaning stands within its own specific cluster of meanings without which concepts conveyed through words "would be a meaningless aphorism."¹²⁴ In other words, for us to appreciate the meaning (meaningfulness and intelligibility) of a word or phrase in a language, we must be able to speak about its "lexicon," the denotation and the connotation of that word or phrase, relating it to clusters of words or phrases which are near-synonyms so that the signification of the word or phrase is understood. Thus within any individual consciousness, there is always an awareness of the reference or sense of a particular unit of meaning to a totality or to a world. This totality or world is conceived by the individual according to the richness or poverty of his language and of his wisdom in using the language. Though this totality or world is often only vaguely experienced, nevertheless it is still there. Thus, for Tillich, every thought of meaning presupposes, as "the object of a silent belief" an absolute or unconditional element.

In our every act of meaning, theoretical as well as practical, a definite concrete meaning is before us, and at the same time, as an object of silent belief, there is an absolute meaning or the meaningfulness of the whole.¹²⁵

This unconditional meaning, towards which every act of meaning is directed in implicit faith, not only is the basis of support for particular meanings but protects and prevents a fall into nothingness devoid of meaning. This supporting meaningfulness, Tillich terms

¹²⁴I.H., p. 222.

¹²⁵I.H., p. 221.

the "ground" and the "substance" of meaning in contrast to particular meanings and their systematic whole, which comprise the "forms" of meaning.¹²⁶ So the unconditional element in meaning is transcendent in regard to each particular meaning, and hence is referred to, by Tillich, as the basis of meaning or the ground of meaning.¹²⁷

We call this object of the silent belief in the ultimate meaningfulness, the basis and abyss of all meaning which surpasses all that is conceivable, God. And we call the direction of the spirit which turns toward Him, religion.¹²⁸

This unconditional element which is essentially (though not always existentially) embodied in the individual meaningful consciousness in the awareness or knowledge of God. And God, for Tillich, is not only the inexhaustible power of being which sustains all being, but also the transcendent unconditioned and the abyss of all meaning, the One whose demands are continually before our minds. For "God is the basis and abyss of meaning, only insofar as He is the one who demands."¹²⁹

Thus, in the experience of meaning, we see an intense dialectical process in action. To bring about fulfilment of meaning or meaning-fulfilment, the conscious self must have a distance between it and the object, yet at the same time a freedom of disposal over it, separating the individual meaning from the totality of meanings, but

¹²⁶ Tillich frequently uses "content" and "substance" interchangeably. See Four Existential Thinkers ed. W. Herberg, (New York: Doubleday, 1958), pp. 242-255; S.T., I., p. 49, but the terms have a tendency to diverge in meaning within Tillich's usage.

¹²⁷ S.T., I., p. 210.

¹²⁸ I.H., p. 222.

¹²⁹ I.H., p. 228.

still silently synthesizing the meaning with the absolute abyss of meaning. The perfect synthesis is what ought to be, and this is what we should attempt to approach. But the conditions of existence prevent this, and hence the difficulty we experience in the realm of communication. However, there are degrees of estrangement, and so long as life is not "empty," so long as we find a meaningful content to our spiritual life, so long some success at meaning-fulfilment might be achieved. In the most extreme case, the "weight" of estrangement causes us to lose our "selves, or as we say, the world is falling to pieces." The world ceases to be a meaningful whole, and things no longer "speak" to us. We have lost our power to enter into a meaningful encounter with our fellow men; we have lost the power to relate. But generally our freedom prevents such an extreme situation and what Tillich terms intentionality assumes a role in once again connecting the self with the world and the environment in an effort at meaning-fulfilment.

Intentionality, the relation to meanings, seems to accentuate the way in which a person is teleologically "reaching after" a synthesis, and implies a kind of "space" through which one moves to connect something in meaning with the whole.¹³⁰ Intention means "living in tension with (and toward) something objectively valid." It is "being related to meaningful structures, living in universals, grasping and

¹³⁰"The teleological argument formulates the question of the ground of meaning...." and does so in the face of "the threat against the finite structure of being, that is, against the unity of its polar elements. The telos... is the 'inner aim,' the meaningful, understandable structure of reality," S.T., I., p. 210.

shaping reality."¹³¹ For man "lives 'in' meanings, in that which is valid logically, aesthetically, ethically, religiously. His subjectivity is impregnated with objectivity."¹³²

To be aware of the self-transcending qualities in one's existence is to be aware of one's ultimate concern. For whatever it may be that is of ultimate concern is his god, and the awareness of this is the knowledge of a god¹³³. If, however, the ultimate concern of man is that which is intrinsically ultimate, or Being-itself, the ground of all being and meaning, then one's awareness of it is the knowledge of God.¹³⁴

Man is essentially in union with the divine, for, as Tillich says;

It is essential man who represents not only man to man but God to man; for essential man, by his very nature, represents God. He represents the original image of God embodied in man, but he does so under the conditions of estrangement between God and man.¹³⁵

It will be recalled that in essential being, reason (here referred to by Tillich as subjective reason) was united with its own "depth" or "depth of reason." In existence, however, subjective reason is separated from the "depth of reason,"¹³⁶ though the separation is not total. In other words, the essential and the existential forces in

¹³¹ S.T., I., p. 180.

¹³² C.B., pp. 81f: cf. T.C., p. 47.

¹³³ S.T., I., p. 211.

¹³⁴ S.T., I., p. 14; D.F., pp. 10-12.

¹³⁵ S.T., II., p. 94.

¹³⁶ See footnote 36 in this chapter.

man, forces of creation and forces of destruction, "are united and dis-united at the same time."¹³⁷ In the state of essential being, "man" was (and is, potentially, in so far as he retains something of essential being under the ambiguities of existence) "transparent" to the depth or ground of being, but in existence, reason in man is "opaque" to the ground of being. Thus, in "falling" from his essential state, and so becoming estranged from God, man's reason has become distorted and darkened and this has robbed man of his ability to give meaning to his knowledge or awareness of God. In God, reason and its depth are united, and the same unity ought to occur in man. "Theonomy" doesn't mean the acceptance of a divine law imposed on reason by a higher authority; it means autonomous reason united with its own depth."¹³⁸ In such a case, we should be able to be aware of God, as it were, "face to face."

When Tillich abstracts man's spiritual or cultural self-affirmation from his moral self-affirmation, he records the effects of non-being on both these situations. Non-being affects spiritual self-affirmation in the form of doubt and meaninglessness, and this emptiness and loss of meaning robs man of his ability to give meaning to the knowledge of God, a knowledge he knows he ought to have by virtue of the fact that he (man) is rooted in the Ground of being. Moral self-affirmation is affected by non-being in the form of guilt and condemnation, resulting in man being unable to fulfill his desire to know and to be with God. Failure to meet this desire simply means

¹³⁷ S.T., I., p. 83.

¹³⁸ S.T., I., p. 85.

self-alienation, and a consequence of this is that man fails to know God or to be aware of or understand Him.¹³⁹

The union of reason with its own depth could occur when the intense desire of man for association with the Ground of being overcomes the effects of estrangement. But this does not appear possible under normal conditions of existence. This state is envisioned in Christianity "potentially at the beginning" (before the fall) and "in the end." However, Tillich does believe that it is possible "fragmentarily and by anticipation" in time, in man's state of existence. "The depth of reason is essentially manifest, but existentially hidden."¹⁴⁰

But this does not mean that in a revelatory situation¹⁴¹ man cannot know anything because of the alienation of his reason from its depth. But it does mean that he has to find a new and special medium in order that he may discuss, interpret, or speak of revelation or the knowledge of God, or even utter intelligible sentences about Being itself. This "new" medium is really not new historically, but Tillich's use of it in his own peculiar way, is new, and its importance is indicated as Tillich refers to the new medium as the center of his doctrine of theological knowledge. That medium is the religious symbol.

There is another avenue stemming from quite a different philosophy, which leads to a similar conclusion, namely that a completely new medium is necessary. Because it takes as its point of departure

¹³⁹Cf. C.B., pp. 41, 46-50, 51-54.

¹⁴⁰S.T., I., p. 80.

¹⁴¹A dependent revelatory situation exists in every moment in which the divine Spirit grasps, shakes and moves the human spirit." (S.T., I., p. 127.)

some statements based on logical empiricism, this approach might be regarded by persons with empiricist leanings as a more cogent argument.

It will be recalled that certain philosophers, especially those owing allegiance to what might loosely be termed logical empiricism, and paradigmatically the A.J. Ayer of Language, Truth and Logic, relegated religious discourse to the realm of the cognitively meaningless.¹⁴² However, a number of religious thinkers, accepting the challenge, have participated in a careful and critical re-examination of religious language. Tillich weighs the problem very seriously, for he conceded that "we are in a confusion of language in theology and philosophy and related subjects which has hardly been surpassed in any time in history."¹⁴³ He further states (in the same article) that words no longer communicate to men what they initially did or what they were intended to communicate and that, in fact, "we no longer have words in which the powerfulness of the word pulsates."¹⁴⁴

A.C. MacIntyre formulated a very piercing question when he asked, "If talk about God is not to be construed at its face value, how is it to be construed?"¹⁴⁵ However, the question of whether what seems to be true or false assertions about God made with religious

¹⁴² A.J. Ayer, Language, Truth and Logic, op. cit., p. 115.

¹⁴³ P. Tillich, "Religious Symbols and Our Knowledge of God," The Christian Scholar, XXXVIII (Sept. 1955), 189.

¹⁴⁴ J.L. Adams, Tillich's Philosophy of Culture, Science and Religion, op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁴⁵ Alasdair MacIntyre, "Is Religious Language so Idiosyncratic that We Can Hope for No Philosophical Account of It?" Metaphysical Beliefs ed. S.E. Toulmin et al., (London: S.C.M. Press, 1957), p. 179.

sentences as a class can (logically) be counted as cognitive seems to be logically prior to the question of whether any particular religious sentence is made to provide a true religious claim or whether any particular assertion about God's existence or nature has ever been made from knowledge.¹⁴⁶ Any conscientious attempt to come to grips with the question of whether religious sentences are cognitive must first deal with the question of whether these statements are to be taken literally, or understood in some other way. Thus the early A.J. Ayer argued that "transcendent truths of religion" were not possible because sentences employed to express such truths have no literal significance. He considered, of course, that sentences which failed to express either a tautology or an empirical hypothesis, lacked significance and hence were cognitively meaningless.¹⁴⁷ However, Ayer was willing to concede that "they may still serve to express or arouse emotion..."¹⁴⁸

Tillich shares with Ayer the standpoint that if religious language is taken literally, it is absurd. Tillich holds that the very meaning of "God" is completely missed and that faith becomes idolatrous if one takes religious or theological language literally.¹⁴⁹ And, on another occasion, referring to illustrations of religious

¹⁴⁶ W.T. Blackstone, The Problems of Religious Knowledge, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1963), p. 47.

¹⁴⁷ A.J. Ayer, op. cit., p. 41.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁴⁹ S.T., II., p. 9.

language, he writes: "Now all this, if taken literally, is absurd."¹⁵⁰

Now if such is the case, and if Tillich is endorsing the Naturalists' and Positivists' varied condemnations of Transcendent Theism by calling the "Ism" absurd,¹⁵¹ he does not seem to wish to go any further and draw the conclusions which most Naturalists and Positivists would next insist upon, namely, rejection of his affiliation with leaders of traditional Christian thought. Thus it seems to me that Tillich has placed himself in a very difficult position (perhaps an untenable position) in that he wants to support the great value and importance of the Gospel for all men seeking a good life, and yet his philosophical insights require that he oppose or at least considerably modify the generally accepted ideas of traditional transcendent theism.

Tillich strives manfully to clear himself from this difficult dilemma by offering a radically different way of construing the Gospel message, as an indication of his consistency and sincerity.

So, for Tillich some new method of interpretation is necessary. This new idea is based on the clarification and proper use of his concept of the religious symbol (and of symbolic language in general). Indeed, Tillich promises that symbols enhance linguistically the "relation between God and man and the Christian experience."¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰P. Tillich, "Religious Symbols and Our Knowledge of God," op. cit., p. 194.

¹⁵¹That is absurd which is inconsistent with accepted ideas, common sense or sound reason; it is applied, therefore, to ideas and projects considered impersonally as well as to persons, their acts, behaviours and utterances. So "absurd" can mean "ridiculously false" as well as "senseless."

¹⁵²P. Tillich, "Religious Symbols and our Knowledge of God," op. cit., p. 194.

To understand and appreciate fully Tillich's epistemology and his epistemological contributions to theology, a full analysis of Tillich's concept of a symbol (qua symbol) must first be undertaken. It is only by coming to grips with the details of Tillich's characterization of the symbol and particularly the religious symbol that one can hope to sense the power which he (Tillich) ascribes to the symbolic mode in the field of religious thought. We will, therefore, in the next chapter, study the characteristics of symbols as asserted by Tillich, and then move on to a study of the concept of the religious symbol and its place in the theological system which he propounded.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SYMBOLS IN GENERAL

IV.1 Symbols and Their Functions: An Introduction.

The word "symbol" has such a wide range of uses in our language that unless the scope of a question like "what is the function of symbols?" can be narrowed down to manageable limits, philosophising about the question is apt to generate more confusion than it removes. It is recognized that there are indefinitely many approaches to philosophical problems about language and symbolization.¹ Each approach characterizes a type of philosopher who by probing into old problems with his own presuppositions, techniques and modes of analysis, usually creates a new cluster of enigmas. It is not my intention in this study to describe and appraise many alternative

¹ Signs and symbols, in a very broad sense, are studied in such sciences as linguistics, logic, biology, archeology, cultural anthropology, sociology, history of religions, aesthetics, philosophy and theology. In the philosophical field, see, for example, Charles Morris, Signs, Language and Behaviour (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1946), and Foundations of the Theory of Signs (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); Susanne K. Langer, "On a New Definition of 'Symbol,'" Philosophical Sketches (Toronto: New American Library of Canada, 1964), pp. 53-61; E. Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965). Since the discipline of semiotics is divided into three parts, namely, pragmatics, semantics and syntax, one could consult, for example, R. Carnap, Philosophy and Logical Syntax (London: Psyche Miniatures, 1935), and Meaning and Necessity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947); L. Linsky ed. Semantics and the Philosophy of Language (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1952); P. Wheelwright, The Burning Fountain (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1954).

ways of considering the nature of symbols or the meaning of "symbols" but rather to concentrate on the general approach adopted by Tillich. The following exposition of Tillich's main positions on language must be seen against the background already sketched, of his philosophy of man, of his views on Metaphysics and Epistemology. But my exposition in this chapter forms, in turn, a background for my later critical discussions of Tillich's concept of symbolism.

In order to establish a truly human way of life, through which the world can become the object of (partial) understanding, and be known intelligently rather than blindly reacted to, man requires tools or instruments which will make forms of intelligent activity and discursive knowledge possible. These crucial instruments, found in all known human societies, are what I shall follow Tillich in technically labelling signs and symbols. Both are formed with, and employed in, the growth of any characteristically human understanding of the world and human agency upon it. Signs and symbols (in Tillich's technical sense that I shall expound) are not mere "physical phenomena," utterances and inscriptions. Utterances and inscriptions express what signs and symbols mean. Signs and symbols, Tillich would say, are entities which serve a unique function, the function of representation. Serving this function in ordinary, everyday language is a constitutive mark of both the sign and the symbol. "Representation," in the area of accounting for cognition, is a term used by Tillich, he tells us,² to designate

²T.C., p. 56. See also R.E.T., p. 3. Peirce defines "represent" as "to stand for, that is, to be in such a relation to another that for certain purposes it is treated by some mind as if

the relation between an abstract concept and a concrete example. But a concrete example of what? One could usefully try to clarify Tillich's meaning by saying a concrete example, in Frege's term,³ of what falls or could fall under that concept. One would thus be said by Tillich, to represent the concept of a tree, at least in some cases, by conjuring up a percept or image of a particular tree. As we shall see, it is not only spatio-temporal particulars like trees that fall or can fall under a concept. Signs and symbols are often word-forms. Here Tillich could usefully have drawn a Peircean distinction between types and tokens, of word-forms.⁴ He seems to mean that, through their particular formal properties, and in the context of some use of a language, tokens of such word-forms can serve to represent some referent, be it an object, a concept, or a thought. Though the functions of signs and symbols are partly alike, being used as a token of a word-form in a language is neither a

it were that other" Charles S. Peirce, Collected Papers (Cambridge: Havard University Press), Vol. II, (1932) #273. Again, "As representation is that character of a thing by virtue of which, for the production of a certain mental effect, it may stand in place of another thing. The thing having this character I term a representamen, the mental effect, or thought, its, interpretant, the thing for which it stands, its object." Peirce, op. cit., Vol. I., #564. Concerning the problem of "representation" see Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms Vol. I., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), pp. 93-105.

³G. Frege, Philosophical Writings ed. P. Geach and Max Black, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952).

⁴Cf. Max Black, Language and Philosophy (New York: Cornell University Press, 1949), and W.B. Gallie, Peirce and Pragmatism (London: Penguin Books, 1952), Chapter V.

necessary nor a sufficient condition for being a Tillichian symbol.⁵

This is made explicit in the way Tillich tries to define the word symbol. "A symbolic expression is one whose proper meaning is negated by that to which it points."⁶

Tillich needs a word to use as a technical term to stand for what he means by "symbol." A new word could have been coined, but the word "symbol," especially because of its long association with "myth," and also with "language" when used very broadly, appeared to Tillich to be excellent for his own purposes. But when he adopted the word "symbol," he was faced with at least two especially difficult problems. One particularly striking problem may be called linguistic and another conceptual.

This linguistic difficulty arose from the fact that in everyday usage the words "sign" and "symbol" are so often interchangeable. Because of his purposes Tillich strongly disliked certain uses of the term "symbol" in mathematical treatises. He seems to confuse prescriptions for technical use and descriptions for accepted use, by calling such mathematical employment misuse.⁷ In order that "symbol" might be used in his own work to express what he meant,

⁵Being used as a token of a word-form is not a necessary condition for objects may act as symbols. It is not a sufficient condition because many words are not used as symbols.

⁶S.T., I, p. 239. G. Gurvitsch, La Nocation Actuelle de la Sociology (Paris, 1950), pp. 74-81, defines a symbol as that sign which concealing reveals and revealing conceals, and, at the same time, is an instrument of participation in values.

⁷T.C., p. 55, and R.E.T., p. 3. See also W.L. Rowe Religious Symbols and God (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 98-99.

Tillich attempted to draw a distinction between signs and symbols by using adjectival devices.⁸ In following the precedent set by science of giving clearly demarcating types of stipulative definitions Tillich abandoned his work with adjectival qualifiers in the hope of using such definitions to provide precise interpretation of how "symbol" was to be understood by his readers.

The conceptual difficulty occurs because of possible confusions about the meaning of the word "symbol." Tillich remarks that many people consider that "the very term 'symbolic' carries the connotation of 'non-real'," and that one of the reasons for this is "the identification of reality with empirical reality, with the entire world of objective things and events."⁹ Tillich in his more Idealistic moments, regards what he takes to lie beyond the world of sense-experience as more real than the empirical. This explains, to some extent, why he regards the clarification of his meaning of the word "symbol", or his view of how we ought to use the word "symbol" in a specialized, restricted way, to be of paramount importance. Further, as we shall see, he held that it is only by the use of symbols (or what he considers genuine symbols)¹⁰ that one may have access to the crucially important, non-empirical features of reality.

⁸See R.E.T., p. 3, where Tillich suggests that the words "discursive" and "representative" be used.

⁹S.T., I., p. 241.

¹⁰D.F., p. 96.

IV.2 The Characteristics of Symbols.

In developing his ideas about the religious symbol, Tillich sometimes prefaced his exposition by a discussion of symbols in general.¹¹ However, on examining these attempted expositions in Tillich's writings of what we do or should understand by crucial terms like "symbols," "signs," "myth," "symbolism," etc., it is found that no two of his major attempts to clarify his concept of a symbol seem to warrant exactly the same conclusions about how he wanted his uses of "symbol" to be understood. In all of these major attempts Tillich recounts the characteristics of symbol in very similar terms, but this similarity of terms used does not indicate that his positions on "symbols" may not be fairly judged to diverge. This is surprising when one notes that his first major publication on the meaning and characteristics of the religious symbol was made as early as 1928.¹² One of the articles was published with his express permission on five different occasions¹³ in his lifetime with only minor alterations, apparently licencing the view that Tillich at least thought his theory of religious symbols to have undergone very little

¹¹See, for example, D.F., pp. 41-45. "In order to understand religious symbols we must first understand the nature of symbols generally." R.E.T., p. 3. See also T.C., pp. 54-59.

¹²P. Tillich, "Das Religiöse Symbol" first published in Blätter für deutsche Philosophie I (Jan. 1928), 277-291, in an issue of that journal devoted to the theme of "The Symbolic."

¹³"Das Religiöse Symbol" was republished in 1930, with notes added in Religiöse Verwirklichung (Berlin), pp. 88-109. In its first English language publication appearance, all but one (the fourth) of the seventeen notes Tillich had added to this article in 1930 were preserved, and Tillich furnished a supplementary paragraph to the last note. See "The Religious Symbol" trans. J.L. Adams with the assistance of Ernest Fraenkel Journal of Liberal Religion. 11

significant change between 1928 and 1960. Some of what he speaks of as characteristics of a symbol in most of his expositions are called functions in the version published in his Theology of Culture.¹⁴

(Summer 1940), 13-33. Tillich slightly re-edited "The Religious Symbol" (this re-editing included the incorporation of the substance of one or two of its notes into the text, and the deletion of all but seven of the rest) for its next two appearances. One of these appearances was in Daedalus Vol. 87 (summer 1958) and the other in "The Religious Symbol" trans. by J.L. Adams with the assistance of Ernest Fraenkel, Symbolism in Religion and Literature edited by Rollo May, (New York: 1960), pp. 75-98. And finally, with all seven of the English notes removed, but otherwise almost unchanged, the article was included as an appendix in Religious Experience and Truth ed. Sidney Hook, (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1961), pp. 301-321. The following are Tillich's major accounts and clarifications of his concept of the symbol, other than those just mentioned.

"Symbol and Knowledge" Journal of Liberal Religion II (Spring 1941), 202-206 (written as a reply to a critique of his article which appeared in Journal of Liberal Religion II (Summer 1940). The critique was by Wilbur M. Urban and appeared on pp. 34-36.

S.T., I, pp. 238-241 (published 1951). Replies to criticism in The Theology of Paul Tillich ed. Charles W. Kegley and R.W. Bretall, (New York: Macmillan, 1952), pp. 333-336; 339-341.

"Religious Symbols and our Knowledge of God" The Christian Scholar XXXVIII (Sep. 1955), 189-197 republished under the new title of "The Nature of Religious Language" in Theology of Culture (1959), pp. 53-57. "Theology and Symbolism", Religious Symbolism ed.

F. Ernest Johnson, (New York: 1955), pp. 107-116.

"Existential Analyses and Religious Symbols", Contemporary Problems in Religion ed. Harold A. Basilius, (Detroit: Wayne University Press, 1956). Chapter II pp. 37-55. Reprinted under the same title in Four Existentialist Theologians ed. Will Herberg, (New York: Doubleday, 1958), pp. 277-291.

S.T., II 8-10; 164f. (1957); D.F., pp. 41-54; 117-121 (1957) "The Meaning and Justification of Religious Symbols" Religious Experience and Truth ed. Sidney Hook, (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1961), pp. 3-11. S.T., III, pp. 107-110; 253-255 (1963).

¹⁴The Christian Scholar. XXXVIII (Sept. 1955), 189-197. Reprinted in T.C., pp. 53-67.

But this change of terminology is not accompanied by an expressed awareness of his ever changing his position.

In order to give my own account (or possible sympathetic reinterpretation) of Tillich's characteristics or functions of symbols, I shall try to synthesize elements from his many papers on symbolism into a single position.

In the most complete exposition of the functions of a symbol in any of his writings, six characteristics are given.¹⁵ However, two more are mentioned in other writings and an eight-fold account based on the period covering 1928-1960 approximately, will be examined. These eight characteristics are associated primarily with Tillich's use of the words and phrases (a) "pointing", (b) "participation", (c) "opening up levels of reality", (d) "unlocking levels of our interior reality", (e) "unintentional production", (f) "growth and death", (g) "perceptibility", (h) "integrating (or disintegrating) power".

(a) The characteristic of a symbol which Tillich usually stresses as being first and foremost is that it points beyond itself to something else.¹⁶ In an early work Tillich refers to this characteristic as its figurative quality.¹⁷ This pointing or figurative characteristic is shared, he tells us, with arbitrary

¹⁵D.F., pp. 41-43.

¹⁶D.F., p. 41.

¹⁷"The first and basic characteristic of a symbol is its figurative quality." R.E.T., p. 301.

and conventional signs which may be altered or changed according as expediency requires.¹⁸ The relationship between signs and symbols will be discussed later.

(b) A second feature is this: a symbol participates in that to which it points. It participates in the power, reality, meaning,¹⁹ honor,²⁰ dignity,²¹ of the referent. The concept of pointing to (which includes those of referring to and standing for) pertains to Tillich's account of signs as well as symbols. But the concepts of representation and participation only pertain to his account of symbols. Here lies the intended difference between full or genuine symbols and mere signs. A symbol both points to reality or some feature of reality and participates in it as well; a sign only points, and does not in any way participate in the reality and power of that to which it points.²² But what does Tillich mean by his rather odd sounding uses of points to, participates in and represents? The use Tillich makes of these verbs will be examined later in this chapter.

(c) Furthermore, Tillich suggests that the symbol "opens up levels of reality which otherwise would be closed to us."²³ Sometimes Tillich speaks of there being levels of meaning and sometimes

¹⁸D.F., p. 42.

¹⁹T.C., p. 54.

²⁰R.E.T., p. 4.

²¹S.T., III., p. 90.

²²T.C., p. 54.

²³D.F., p. 42.

also he holds that there are levels of being which are opened up by the symbol.²⁴ Since one of the many meanings of "meaning" for Tillich is a process whereby some feature or features of reality will be brought before personal awareness,²⁵ then symbols can play an important part in revealing levels not previously recognized. Tillich tries to illustrate and clarify what he means here by references to paintings, for example to a landscape by Rubens, works by Cezanne and Van Gogh.²⁶

(d) In a similar vein he writes that the symbol unlocks dimensions and elements of our soul which correspond to the levels of reality or "levels of our interior reality." Melodies and rhythms in music, he says, often unlock depths of which a person was previously unaware.²⁷

(e) However, one cannot effectively utilise a word or anything else as a genuine symbol merely by consciously intending or choosing so to employ it. What is consciously chosen to be given duty as a symbol "cannot function without being accepted by the unconscious

²⁴"Theology and Symbolism" Religious Symbolism ed. F. Ernest Johnson, (New York: Religion and Civilization Series, 1955), pp. 109f.

²⁵"Ordinary language, which expresses and denotes the ordinary experience of mind and reality in their categorical structure, is made the vehicle for expressing and denoting the extra-ordinary experience of mind and reality in ecstasy and sign-event The expressive power of language is its ability to disclose and to communicate personal states." (S.T., I., p. 123).

²⁶T.C., p. 57. See also The Religious Situation trans. H. Richard Niebuhr, (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), p. 87.

²⁷D.F., pp. 42f.; T.C., p. 57.

dimension of our being."²⁸

(f) Moreover it must be accepted by the group to which the communicator belongs before it can function as a genuine symbol. Symbols are so dependent on certain evolving and disappearing properties of the person who use them that it can even be said that like finite beings, they grow and die.²⁹

In the last paragraph I have tried in good part either to mention or to use Tillich's own words and phrases with a view to introducing more of his thought on symbols as participating in that to which they point. Unfortunately his uses of the words and phrases for explicating this second characteristic of symbols are often moving and rather beautifully suggestive, but just as often vague, portentous and puzzling. Let me now move to the Formal Mode and also to the meta-language, often unwisely neglected in theology, of robust Common Sense. I venture the metalinguistic suggestion that a great deal of Tillichian talk about opening up levels of being through symbols and the like can have an important amount of its point caught by much more straightforward language like the following.

(1) "This is used here as a sign for X," often means roughly "This is used to refer to X in a relatively minimal descriptive way," as when I use the words "Take this one away" to tell someone to take that T.V. set away. The use of "this one" here indicates the thing I want taken away without saying very much of importance about what sort of a thing it is. (I could so tell an ignorant savage with an

²⁸D.F., p. 43.

²⁹D.F., p. 43; S.T., I, p. 240.

English vocabulary of 150 words if it included demonstratives like "this" and the all-purpose labeller "thing" to take "this thing" away though he had no comprehension of "television" at all).

(2) "This is used here as a symbol for X" means roughly "This is used here both to refer to X and to convey the communicator's relatively deep understanding of what X is or what some features of X are to the actual or potential receiver" (listener or reader or viewer). (3) "This use of S as a symbol here unlocks some new depths of reality and opens up new levels of reality" often roughly means "S" is used in such a way here that

EITHER (i) the actual or potential "receiver"

Or (ii) both the communicator and the "receiver" will be made aware by the use of S of some now newly understandable and more profoundly important set of features of what is referred to by this use of S; moreover the kind of awareness and understanding created by some uses of S goes with a heightened or deepened sense of the communicator's and receiver's belonging together in a unified harmonious whole with S's referent and these profoundly important and striking features of S's referent only now grasped and at least partly understood.³⁰

(4) "This use of S as a symbol here opens up some new levels of meaning" often roughly means "S is used in such a way here that

EITHER (i) the actual or potential receiver

OR (ii) both communicator and receiver become aware by its use

³⁰For an elucidation of what such a heightened or deepened sense might be see Spinoza's Ethics. See also John King-Farlow and J.M. Rothstein, "Dialogue concerning Natural Metaphysics" Southern Journal of Philosophy, VI (1968), 24-30.

- EITHER (iii) of now newly understandable and more profoundly important features of what is referred to and explicated by the use of S
- OR (iv) of now newly understandable and profoundly illuminating ways in which S can be used that relate harmoniously to more familiar uses of S.

(g) Another characteristic of Tillichian symbols mentioned in earlier writings on the subject, is omitted from the six characteristics given in Dynamics of Faith. He tries to convey what the characteristic is by using the word "perceptibility." Asserting that a symbol has this characteristic, says Tillich,

... implies that something which is intrinsically invisible, ideal or transcendent is made perceptible in the symbol and in this way given objectivity.³¹

The symbol, which must be "concrete" and which must have the property of making the referent "perceptible" in the symbol may refer to something that is only a thought in the mind, as for example, in the case of imagination of possible referents.³² Even what Tillich

³¹R.E.T., p. 301.

³²Of course, there is a possible confusion here. The words "perception" or "perceptible" do not necessarily refer to a material thing. That is, Tillich is not speaking of physical perception, but of thoughts, ideas, images or pictures of the mind. However, it is somewhat peculiar that Tillich makes "perceptibility" an attribute of a symbol when it is its referent that should be made perceptible. Perhaps one might use (as an example) the religious symbol Jesus as the Christ to make us see what is present in every man. Without the symbol we are unable to see it; with the symbol we can. The relation between a religious symbol and reality is that the symbol enables us to see something which is present but which would not be perceptible without the symbol. The purpose of a symbol is to point away from itself as a single entity to the depth which it is manifesting in its own especial way. What is perceptible in a religious symbol is the very thing that we should, but do not, see everywhere. And this failure to see is due to our estrangement from our essential being. Tillich reminds us that there "should be" no myth or ritual (S.T., I., p. 80).

calls abstract concepts³³ may, we are told, be used as symbols if "their use involves a perceptible element."³⁴ Thus Tillich instances the use of the

concept of "surplus value" as a symbol of economic exploitation in the consciousness of the proletariat or the idea of the "Supreme Being" as a symbol of ultimate concern in the consciousness of the religious community³⁵

Such talk is perhaps more intelligible if partially construed in the following way. The concept of bluejay is not the concept of any particular bluejay or of a particular spatio-temporal individual. The concept of the one bluejay that bit my dog in Victoria, British Columbia, on Easter Monday 1971, is the concept of a particular spatio-temporal individual. I can feel something real and immediate and graspable for a person, so to speak, when I use or find used, words that serve to express the latter concept. Not everything that can be real-and-immediate-and-graspable-for-a-person ("perceptible") need be a separate spatio-temporal individual. I can use the words "surplus value" to express the concept in such a way that the facts

Essentially we should be able to see the depth of reality without symbols, but because of our estrangement, we cannot.

³³The potential for radically confused uses of the word "concept" is brought out by John King-Farlow and E.A. Hall, "Man, Beast and Philosophical Psychology" B.J.P.S. (1965), 80-101. Tillich's way of speaking about using concepts as symbols is confusing. Perhaps it would often be an improvement if he spoke of using symbols to express concepts which we already have and to form and express new concepts as well. Also he would often help the reader by distinguishing between concepts and terms (which have meaning and which are used to express concepts).

³⁴R.E.T., p. 301.

³⁵R.E.T., pp. 301-302.

of economic exploitation and the growing consciousness of it in those who suffer from it, will become real-and-immediate-and-graspable-for-a-person.

Tillich's use of the word "perceptible" is not entirely clear. He does not claim that an abstract concept (a kind of thing-in-itself) is itself perceptible, but he does claim that the use of the concept must in some way involve perceptibility, may be in some form of insight or intuition, perhaps "receptivity" of awareness.³⁶ However, he holds that even an abstract (and therefore cognitive) concept may be a symbol if its "use involves any perceptible element."³⁷ Tillich preserves the distinction between cognition and perception for one notices that it is not the abstract principle in itself which is perceptible, but that the perceptibility is involved in its use, or in its presence in the consciousness of some persons who do or can share some system of communication. It is conceivable that neither the referent nor the symbol need be perceptible (in the physical sense) but

...it is impossible to be concerned about something which cannot be encountered concretely, be it in the realm of reality or in the realm of imagination.³⁸

(h) Finally, a symbol is said to have integrating and dis-integrating power, both with reference to individuals and to groups.³⁹

³⁶T.C., p. 89.

³⁷T.P.T., p. 237 and "The Religious Symbol," in Rollo May, op. cit., p. 76.

³⁸S.T., I., p. 211.

³⁹R.E.T., p. 5.

It would seem that Tillich is referring here to the unity and harmony which may be effected in groups if the right or correct symbols are in use. The harmony in the group is felt in the "self" of the individual, or as Tillich says, the individuals in the group feel the "integrating" power of the cluster of symbols, if, of course the symbols are genuine.

We may now turn to an examination of some of the characteristics of a symbol in more detail.

IV.3 The Pointing Characteristic: "Referential," "Statemental" and "Evocative" Functions.

The function of "pointing" is applicable to both signs and symbols. In stating that both signs and symbols point to something, Tillich often appears to be using the verb "to point" very loosely. In different contexts of application, it turns out to be synonymous with differing members of quite a wide cluster of terms. Sometimes in Tillichian usage it is synonymous with "to direct" as in "to direct one's attention to" or "to draw one's attention to." Sometimes it is better understood by reference to such verbs as "to allude to" or "to indicate" or "to pay heed to" or "to take note of."

Let me give instances of its diverse meanings in varied contexts. The depiction of a curved "arrow," when used as a road sign, and when perceived by the driver of some vehicle, directs his attention to, or indicates, that ahead, there is an actual or "real" curve in the road, and heed must be paid and certain mechanisms manipulated, if disaster is not to overtake him. Or again, a sign bearing a man with a pick shovel and wheelbarrow, indicates to the

driver of a vehicle that he is to take note of and as a result, act in a manner that will not endanger the lives of those working ahead. In the case of such signs, little difficulty or confusion arises, provided that (a) the signs are perceptible and (b) they are correctly interpreted, that is to say, if it is realized that they do point to something and also what that something is to which they allude. This type of sign may be referred to as figurative or mimetic.

Though some words in a language may be symbols, many words, according to Tillich are merely signs. "Words in a language are signs for the meaning they express."⁴⁰ It would seem that there is a problem here if it is implied that linguistic signs or symbols "point to" the meaning they express. It is not easy to determine what Tillich means when he talks of a linguistic sign pointing to its meaning. Apart from being confused by the ambiguity noted of "point to," Tillich probably suffers as was suggested earlier from not drawing Frege's distinction with regard to meaning between Sinn and Bedeutung. Tillich's own illustration of pointing involves the word "desk." Obviously the word "desk" is a sign pointing to something quite different from the letters which form the word. While there is some imitative connection between a road sign and the thing to which it points, nothing in the word "desk" indicated that it means "a thing on which paper is lying and at which we might be looking."⁴¹

⁴⁰T.C., p. 55.

⁴¹T.C., p. 58.

Recalling that Tillich says of words that "they point beyond themselves to sounds and meanings,"⁴² it would seem that in many cases he wants "to point to" to mean "to refer to" and that the meaning to which the word points is to be identified with that to which the word refers. There is really no great trouble here, only perplexing cumbersomeness, if this simply means in clearer statements "very often the English word "desk" by virtue of its conventional sense (Sinn) must be used to refer to (Bedeuten) desks. Thus "this desk" can have in context the Bedeutung (reference, denotation) of the chair I'm pointing to, and the Sinn (meaning) "This piece (pieces) of furniture typically used for writing purposes."⁴³

However, if it is accepted that "point to" in the case of referring uses of words as Tillichian signs and symbols is at least partly equivalent to some member of the cluster of semantic verbs like "to signify" and if the meaning (Meinung qua Sinn) of the word is not identified with the referent (Bedeutung) then a more coherent account could be given of much, but not all, Tillichian discourse about symbols and signs pointing. In fact, in many cases, it might be preferable to use verbs like "to signify," "to denote," "to refer to" with a relative minimum of descriptive implications.

But this is probably far from the whole story about Tillich's manifold of ideas about "pointing to." For it is quite likely that

⁴²D.F., p. 41.

⁴³Cf. W.P. Alston, Philosophy of Language (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 13. See also L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), pp. 216-218.

Tillich thinks it is common or even characteristic for many signs to point to things by looking like them, or by evoking images of them, or by creating emotional attitudes towards what is referred to in the minds of the receivers as well as those who are communicating the sign. Tillich's ways of talking too often suggest that in order to understand the meaning of certain statements, one must experience an appropriate variety of evoked images and emotions. Part of his doctrine of signs, symbols and meanings, may well rest on some out-dated ideas about human thoughts in psychology and philosophy like those of Hume or Berkeley. Tillich's talk of signs pointing beyond themselves to "sounds" may even be evidence that he thought of the uses of some written words as registering their meanings in the mind by evoking sounds of spoken words in the mind.⁴⁴

Let us now consider what happens if some of Tillich's examples are now more charitably rewritten in a different form. Road signs conventionally signify it to be the case that a curve or workmen are ahead, or whatever the sign conventionally and appropriately signifies. Here "point to" may be translated by "signify" not to show that it is used primarily as a denoting verb, but that it is unpacked as something like a statemental verb phrase like "advertize the fact that," "warn persons (drivers) that," or "be a conventional sign stating that."⁴⁵

⁴⁴Cf. L. Wittgenstein Philosophical Investigations op. cit. #39. An expression like "Excalibur," "Mr. Jones," "The man in the Iron Mask" does not lose its sense if excalibur etc. are destroyed.

⁴⁵It must not be thought that 'to signify' is any less ambiguous than 'to point to' etc. To signify may mean "to be a sign or symbol of"; "to represent, betoken or mean"; "to have an import of," "to

Two of Tillich's own instances are:

A red light and the stopping of cars have essentially no relation to each other, but conventionally they are united as long as the convention lasts. The same is true of letters and numbers and partly even words. They point beyond themselves to sounds and meanings. They are given this special function by convention within a nation or by international conventions⁴⁶

... signs can always be replaced. If one finds that a green light is not so expedient as perhaps a blue light (this is not true, but could be true), then we simply put on a blue light, and nothing is changed.⁴⁷

Conventionality is the key to significance when the relation of a sign to that which it denotes or to that which it states is under consideration.

For contexts where Tillich's uses of "signs" and "point to" are more usefully unpacked "statementally" rather than "denotatively," we should now offer fresh analogues to the four earlier meta-linguistic remarks about a good deal of the meaning of some of Tillich's sentences in which "sign," "symbol," "levels of reality," "levels of meaning," etc. occur.

(1) "This is used here as a sign for X," often means (roughly) "This is used here to state/suggest/warn etc. that X is going on/ that an activity or state of affairs obtains, the statement of which can be conventionally nominalized by a noun or noun-phrase X."

(2) "This is used here as a symbol for X," means roughly "This is used here (a) to state/suggest/warn etc. that a state of

foreshadow," "to notify or inform," "to be of importance," "to have significance," etc.

⁴⁶D.F., p. 41.

⁴⁷T.C., p. 58.

affairs obtained, the statement of which can be conventionally nominalized by X AND (b) to convey the communicator's relatively deep understanding of what it is for this to be the case, and also of the profounder implications of its being the case to the actual or potential receiver.

(3) "This use of S as a symbol here unlocks some new depths or reality and opens up new levels of reality," means roughly "S" is used here in such a way that either

- (i) the actual or potential receiver,
- or (ii) both the communicator and the receiver

will be made aware by the use of S of some now newly understandable and more profoundly important set of features of what is suggested or implied by the use of S. The awareness and understanding created by some uses of S is considerably heightened by an intuitive sense in the receivers and communicators of belonging in unity through the suggested sense of S.

(4) "This use of S as a symbol here opens up some new levels of meaning," often roughly means that "S" is used in such a way that either (i) the actual or potential receiver or (ii) both communicator and receiver will be aware of new and profounder features suggested, implied, intuited by the use of S, giving a sense of newly understandable and profoundly illuminating ways in which S is able by suggestion and implication to weld a communicating group more harmoniously together.

While it is true that understanding what it is that the redness or green-ness of a traffic light signifies, generally involves associating it as a "human-conventional-sign" with a need for good

judgment about the right of way or imperative halting of vehicles, there are phenomena which are usefully called signs that are differently connected with what they signify, indicate, point to, suggest, etc. Such phenomena, we usefully say, warn us (indicate to us) etc. that other phenomena have occurred or are occurring or will occur. These signs may be termed natural signs. Examples of this type of sign are nimbus clouds, rainbows, sun dogs, etc.⁴⁸

Nimbus clouds, rainbows and sun dogs, etc. belong to a class of signs completely ignored by Tillich. Some philosophers of language (for example, Wittgenstein) may not find this perplexing. But in Tillich it is puzzling, since he seems to hope to grasp the essence of being a sign which will fit all cases of what we call signs in ordinary English. Nimbus clouds certainly signify that rain is on the way, rainbows that rain drops are present in the sun's rays, and the appearance (albeit of short duration) of a sun dog warns us that we may reasonably expect a fall in temperature already low. Now these signs are certainly not conventional - they cannot be consciously removed, neither can they be replaced by other signs for reasons of expediency. They appear to have an inductively establishable connection of very high probability to that to which they point. It is, to use currently favoured jargon, a sign established as a good pointer by virtue of nature's regularities and not a sign conventionally established by man as part of his rule-governed activities. Hence, it seems that if we set aside Tillich's tendencies towards essentialism, they do not qualify to be classed

⁴⁸Cf. W.L. Rowe op. cit., pp. 108-109.

as signs in Tillich's scheme. And yet it seems certain that Tillich would, in almost all cases, not regard them as symbols either. Of course, it could be argued that in some sense of "participation," nimbus clouds do participate in precipitation because they participate so importantly in regular natural sequences that culminate in precipitation, but it would be odd to talk of participation in any sense in the other two cases.

However, it must be conceded that Tillich asserts that any given entity under suitable conditions, could become a symbol, so a nimbus cloud (or any other natural sign) could be so designated, if it were felt that for any group of worshippers, some useful purpose would be served, and, of course, if it was accepted by that group. Maybe these black clouds could be conceived as pointing to and participating in divine anger, and if this were to constitute a divine-human relationship within religious experience, it would qualify as an example of what Tillich means by "correlation."⁴⁹

If, as some texts strongly suggest,⁵⁰ Tillich is looking for an essence of signhood to be found in all cases of what we call signs, then his neglect of natural signs is not consistent with his

⁴⁹The "wrath of God" must not be confused with the "anger of the gods" of pagan stories. The "wrath of God" is a metaphorical symbol and is not to be given a literal interpretation. See S.T., I., p. 284.

⁵⁰To Tillich, the term "essence" is "very ambiguous." He lists a number of "things" which "essence" may mean, but he subsumes these under two main headings. He wrote (S.T., I., pp. 202-203): "Essence as the nature of the thing, or as the quality in which a thing participates, or as a universal, has one character. Essence as that from which being has "fallen" ... has another character." Tillich, on a number of occasions deals with the former type of essence: see, for example, S.T., I., pp. 101, 165, 176, 178, 202,

"Platonic" search.⁵¹ We might consider two "exits" for Tillich:

(a) Maybe he might have been wiser to seek no such unifying essence in all cases of signs, and concentrate on conventional signs, which he seems to have done. But this would require justification from a more sophisticated philosophy of language than the sort which he offers. Or (b) consistent with his linguistic essentialism (if less consistent with his view of God as being-itself), he could regard natural phenomena somewhat in the spirit of Berkeley, by somehow juggling with both (1) Berkeley's belief that a Personal Transcendent speaks partly in Divine visual language to his creatures,⁵² and (2) with a rider not to offer this suggestion in a spirit of literalism or anthropomorphism. But since Tillich takes no such way out,

203, 254, S.T., II., p. 21, L.P.J., pp. 1, 2, 7, 18-20, 73, 88, and 107. But he does not ever concentrate on giving the essence of a sign or of a symbol.

He seems to confine himself to an enumeration of some general characteristics (see, for example, S.T., I., pp. 176, 177, 239, D.F., 42, etc.), and then passes on to a study of signs and symbols within the realm of application without asking himself whether these characteristics indeed specify signs and symbols to the exclusion of other somewhat similar groups, for example, index, ikon, signal, indication, image, metaphor, allegory, analogy etc. C. Morris, "Foundations of the Theory of Signs" in Foundations of the Unity of Science, Vol. I., ed. Otto Neurath, Rudolf Carnap and Charles Morris, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 3rd impression 1971), pp. 95-97, makes a distinction between indexical signs, characterizing signs and universal signs and then sub-divides characterizing signs into icons and symbols. C.S. Peirce Selected Writings ed. Philip P. Wiener, (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), p. 407, distinguishes sixty-six classes!

⁵¹Cf. L. Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations, op. cit., 23, 66 and 67.

⁵²Cf. for example, Berkeley selected and edited by T.E. Jessop, (London: Nelson, 1952), pp. 30ff. "The proper objects of vision constitute a universal language of the Author of nature." See also G.J. Warnock, Berkeley (London: Penguin Books, 1953), pp. 42f.

and appears committed to a unifying essence of signs, it might be suggested that, to alleviate this enigma, two sets of criteria could be offered to capture the essence of sign-hood, and to demarcate "true" signs from those which masquerade as true signs.

Set I. The first set has two criteria. The first criterion could be the one already enunciated by Tillich, namely, that a sign must point beyond itself to something else, and the second criterion may be stated: a sign must be conventional, and may be changed purely for reasons of expediency.⁵³ Each criterion or condition would then become a necessary condition, and the conjunction of the two would be sufficient for something being classified as a sign. This conjunction would eliminate the problem raised by the introduction of natural signs, instances of which have been given. However, this does not wholly eliminate the problem, given Tillich's essentialist quest for signhood, for the question immediately arises concerning the classification of those representations which have been termed "natural" signs. At least if the amended criteria are applied, natural signs are not Set-I-signs, and they are not members of the correlative Set-I-symbols either. For they do not participate in the power of the symbolized, as required by Tillich's criteria for a symbol - at least not if what Tillich means by "participation" and "power" can

⁵³I do not know how Tillich would prefer to deal with cases where a sign points to itself and its own properties. Take for example the sign "This sign" used to refer to itself, or the sign-containing sentence "This typed sentence" (used to refer to itself) "is this typed sentence." One way might be for him to fall back on his idea-evoking notion of signs - the typed sentence would thus "point to sounds" beyond itself to be formed in the reader's head, or given the wide looseness of "point to" this sign, "this sign" could be said also to point to concepts, conventions, typewriters etc.

be adequately specified. Thus it seems reasonable to state that although "pointing to" is a necessary condition for some thing or idea being a Set-I-sign or a Set-I-symbol, it is not a sufficient condition.

Set-II-signs and Set-II-symbols pertain to the essence of signhood and symbolism but do not pertain clearly to Tillich's theological interests. Members of these Sets meet the first criterion of Set-I-signs, but not the second in virtue of being "natural" signs.

Natural signs may be explored further by examining these enigmatic entities in the light of other characteristics required of a symbol. According to Tillich a defining characteristic of a symbol is participation. "Participation" is a word which is particularly difficult to define. It would seem that if I use one of the verbs or verb phrases often substitutable in context for the verb "participate" such as "be linked with," "be intimately connected with," nimbus clouds "participate in rain" because they "participate" in the sequence culminating in rain, are causally linked with rain, are intimately connected with the forming of rain drops in a common natural process etc. However, a symbol is also said by Tillich to be something which "opens levels of reality." Though, poetically, one may imagine that someone's seeing a nimbus cloud could "unlock dimensions of the soul," it is not customary to think of a nimbus cloud as performing these acts. Nimbus clouds cannot be produced intentionally, but in a loose sense, they do "grow and die." Thus one or two of the minor criteria for being symbols, in Tillich's notion of symbols, are satisfied by nimbus clouds. But the major criteria are not.

The second criterion suggested for the category of Set-I-signs preclude what I call natural signs from being placed in that class. One solution might be to place natural signs in a third class, intermediate between Tillich's two classes of signs and symbols, in Set-I-signs and Set-I-symbols, but closer perhaps to Set-I-signs on that continuum. This new class might usefully be given a less abstract title than Set-II-signs, and I suggest (i) indicators (if the word is employed in accordance with the scientific use of that term)⁵⁴ or (ii) ominous or semiotic sign (after one Greek use of semeion as meaning "an omen from the gods.") This third class would then have a close connection with Tillich's favoured signs (Set-I-signs), because one criterion would clearly apply. The link between Set-II-signs and Set-I-symbols would be less clear. But this is, of course, due to the considerable difficulty of understanding the way certain terms are used by Tillich to express the other characteristics of symbols besides the none too luminous sign-characteristic of "pointing to."

Of course, it might be suggested that Tillich's prime focus was on symbols rather than signs, and hence he did not attempt a complete analysis of signs except in so far as they could be differentiated from symbols. The main point which Tillich wished to stress was that participation is the most important characteristic of symbols and one which separates them from signs and quasi-signs. The criterion of participation, it will be recalled, is a criterion

⁵⁴Cf. F.P. Treadwell and W.T. Hall, Analytical Chemistry Vol. II (New York: John Wiley, 1919), pp. 538-539. The French word "indicateur" means indicator, pointer or informer.

for a symbol, not for a sign. The symbol is said to participate in the reality to which it points⁵⁵ or to participate in the meaning and power of the reality to which it points.⁵⁶ The necessary condition for something being a symbol is a conjunction of two criteria: a symbol must point beyond itself and participate in that to which it points.

IV.4 Participation.

The concept of participation has been considered in the previous chapter in connection with epistemological participation. There, we decided in our analysis, to break down the vague concept of participation into four distinct classes, and this result will be used when considering the further implications concerned with symbolic participation. The four classes were (i) Participation₁ - thing and thing; (ii) Participation₂ - human person and thing (iii) Participation₃ - human person and human person (iv) Participation₄ - human person and divine person. If the term "participation" appears in the text without a subscript, I shall be using the word in a loose general way, perhaps in a sense of that which is shared by all four classes. Some forms of discussion, as Aristotle pointed out, require a looseness forbidden in geometry: in trying to understand what Tillich meant, one is sometimes required to resort to a level of looseness unacceptable in explicating Euclid or Tarski.⁵⁷

⁵⁵See, for example, S.T., I., p. 239.

⁵⁶D.F., p. 42.

⁵⁷See Aristotle De Anima II. 2; 413a, 13-20. Topics Book VI. See also Richard Robinson, Definition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), pp. 8-11, 140, 142-148, 154, 196 and esp. 197.

We have seen that to participate in something, to identify oneself with some thing or group, implies that one is separated from the remainder, and hence participation has a connotation of being partially "in" and partially "out." These two states, participation and separation, presented simultaneously in the concept of a symbol, demonstrate the polar composition of a symbol. A religious symbol participates⁴ in the power of the symbolized, but it is vital that, at the same time, it is separated from that to which it points. For if it were otherwise, the symbol would become, what Tillich describes as "demonic." The corollary concept of affirmation and negation and the concept of demonization will be examined more thoroughly in a later chapter.

Tillich is fully aware of the importance of "being a part of" in the concept of participation. He instances a number of cases. For example, a nation's flag, a nation's King (and although a King is a person, he will in this case be merely acting as a physical object) all participate in the nation's power.

... the flag participates in the power of the king or the nation for which it stands and which it symbolizes. There has, therefore, been a fight ... as to how to behave in the presence of the flag. This would be meaningless if the flag did not participate as a symbol in the power of that which it symbolizes. The whole monarchic idea is itself entirely incomprehensible, if you do not understand that the king always is both: on the one hand, a symbol of the power of the group of which he is the king and on the other hand, he who exercises partly (never fully of course) this power.⁵⁸

Thus there is a correct pattern of behaviour in the presence of a nation's flag, a nation's king, a nation's national anthem and the

⁵⁸T.C., p. 55.

like. However, the pattern of behaviour is only expected from those who accept and personally endorse the flag, king, etc. as a symbol of the nation. Today it is very plain that the once wide acceptance and endorsement of this type of symbol is declining among certain sections of certain nations. As Tillich would say, "the symbol is dying." If the hostility of a certain section is sufficient, then the symbol is "dead," and a new symbol, (perhaps a new flag) replaces the old.⁵⁹ It would appear that for A to participate in B means that A is similar to B in the respect that the most important behaviour pattern exhibited by a certain community towards A and B is similar. Of course, this does not mean that A and B are similar in physical form, but it does not necessarily exclude this either.

However, patterns of behaviour towards X's and Y's are not adequate bases for distinguishing Xs as genuine symbols, or Ys as signs. For example, the nation's flag is a symbol recognized by the whole nation, whereas a regimental flag, though it may be a symbol for that regiment, is but a sign to the rest of the nation. Yet, an observer would notice little difference in the behaviour pattern exhibited by a member of the regiment towards either flag. To say that, for some entity to be a symbol, the response to it must be basically similar to that which would be accorded to what is a

⁵⁹As Dr. R.A. Shiner has pointed out to me, if the flag becomes identified with the political policies of a certain administration, and not with the country and the ideals it stands for, then the apparent "misuse" of the flag by certain demonstrators would indicate that the symbol is not dying. This is true, and I would concede the point. But I feel that perhaps some of us might regard the sort of actions referred to as a radical re-interpretation of that symbol which could be considered "demonic."

paradigm case, would appear to need an obvious qualification. The whole response must depend on the context. For example, the response to bread and wine is quite different, or at least should be quite different, if these food staples are on the Lord's table, or on the home table at a breakfast dutifully rushed because of some failure in the mechanism of a clock. It seems to me that by citing behavioural criteria that indicate when one can wisely apply the term in talking about other people's acceptance of something as a symbol, Tillich is both using his examples of the reaction towards symbols as a partial explicans of the meaning of the term "participation," which is helpful, and also citing the reaction as a causal explicans of the actual occurrence of participation, which is confusing. For the behaviour pattern is really a causal and not a logical consequence, or at least not necessarily a logical consequence of the symbol's power over participants, and certainly the behaviour is not an explanation of participation.

Though the expression "to explain the meaning" has very different meanings, it is comparatively easy to distinguish two of these, at least roughly. These are (i) making clear a single word's meaning, and (ii) expounding or interpreting the content of a given message (a message possibly involving the use of many words in sentences which are in turn used in various ways). This does not refer to the meaning (point, purpose, value, etc.) of events or actions of life⁶⁰ but to the meanings of words.

⁶⁰See Daniel M. Taylor, Explanation and Meaning (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1970), Chapters 1-5, and Abraham Kaplan,

Let us talk about such explainings of explanations of meaning in terms of linguistic explication. A linguistic explicans offers a "verbal set" consisting of one or more words having a meaning equivalent to or appropriately similar to those being explained. A useful linguistic explication should normally, of course, offer a word or sequence of words which may be more readily understood in the context of the original explicandum. It is, in most cases, essential that a useful explicans be directed to someone with an appropriate interest or need, and it must be reasonably expected to be readily understood by that person. What is intelligible for A may not be intelligible for B; C may not need any explanation at all; D may regard that which is given as inadequate for satisfying his particular need or interest. Obliging someone or looking after someone, as some explainers of meaning tend to forget, will not necessarily be achieved by trying to be helpful in a vigorous way, but only in accordance with one's own views of being helpful. Really explaining verbiage, like really obliging, requires sensitivity in context to the appropriate people's needs, interest and desires.

On the other hand, a causal consequence is the result or effect or outcome of some cause and hence is not the same thing as an explanation. Consequences are states-of-affairs, (not linguistic explications), which appear to be due to the conditioning of the group who believe that the referent of the symbol has caused it to be invested with some kind of inherent power. This belief in such a power itself goes with the power of the symbol in use to evoke proper

and sincere behaviour. Such a pattern of belief, feeling and behaviour is an indication that that person is an authorized member of that group.

However, it must be conceded that it is sometimes possible to shed light on the nature of a term by offering consequences which would occur if the act represented by the term were carried out. If this is what Tillich intends, clarification through consequences, then this must be accepted, but it still remains that to explain (linguistically) should be distinguished from the consequences of an act.

Tillich sums up in one small paragraph the general functions of his concept of participation. He writes:

The concept of participation has many functions. A symbol participates in the reality it symbolizes; the knower participates in the known; the lover participates in the beloved; the existent participates in the essences which make it what it is, under the conditions of existence; the individual participates in the destiny of separation and guilt, the Christian participates in the New Being as it is manifest in Jesus the Christ. In polarity with individualization, participation underlies the category of relation as a basic ontological element.⁶¹

These illustrations of some of the functions of participation have been cast in the same linguistic mould, perhaps in an attempt to persuade us that these statements support each other. As R.N. Smart suggests, their diversity becomes evident when the passage is carefully scrutinized.⁶²

⁶¹S.T., I., p. 177.

⁶²R.N. Smart, "Being and the Bible," Review of Metaphysics IX, (1956), 595ff.

Consider Tillich's first example, "a symbol participates in the reality it symbolizes." We might find in this one example a confusing instance of all four classes of participation being crammed together.⁶³ If the symbol is a concrete inanimate thing like a painting, and if reality in this case refers to that which the painting is attempting to convey, then we have the ingredients for an example of participation₁. On the other hand, if the symbol is a person (for example, Jesus) pointing to and sharing in the divine life, then we have an example of participation₄. Take the second example, "The knower participates in the known." Let us assume that the known is an object (animate or inanimate) then we would designate this an example of participation₂. The third example is obviously a case of participation₃, for no alleged lover whom Tillich would allow to be really indeed a lover, would treat his beloved as a mere object or thing. The existent and the essences may refer to the participation of existence, in existence₂ by the creature known as man, or it may refer to a particular participating in a universal. Next, we have participation₃, the individual's participation in sin, and finally a case of participation₄.

IV.5. L.S. Ford's Analysis of Participation in Tillich.

L.S. Ford attempts an analysis of participation using an entirely different frame of reference from the four-class system which I have suggested.⁶⁴ He distinguishes five kinds of ways in

⁶³For the four classes of participation, see Chapter III.

⁶⁴L.S. Ford, "The Three Strands of Tillich's Theory, Journal of Religion XLVI (No. 1 part 2, 1966), 104-130.

which Tillichian participation occurs. But he concedes both that there are sub-divisions to some of his classes, and that there are other kinds not included in his analysis. To consider the placing of the different kinds into a single category is impossible. Ford designates his five major categories as (a) the CAUSAL, (b) the INCLUSIVE, (c) the RECEPTIVE, (d) the ENVIRONMENTAL, and (e) the ESSENTIAL, of which only (d) and (e) are relevant to symbolic participation.

(a) CAUSAL PARTICIPATION, according to Ford, concerns the relation between cause and effect. If B participates in A causally, then A causes B. The effect participates in the cause as the outcome of that cause. Tillich, however, gives but few explicit examples of this kind of participation. In one case, he instances the forces acting upon a falling leaf.⁶⁵ This kind of participation is not fully explored in Tillich, perhaps because he regards this kind as a scientific variety having little direct relevance to theological concepts. However, he does insist that a man participates in his own destiny. This appears to mean that his own actions will cause his future actions, and so on, affecting the whole of his future life. It seems to me that Tillich here is talking of causal participation much as one talks about causes and effects in ordinary language. Though Tillich does not elaborate on causal participation, it does appear to underlie his whole idea that finite beings possess the power of being only through this kind of participation. That is, the power of being causes the being to be, with freedom to decide

⁶⁵S.T., I., p. 176.

further effects.⁶⁶ The epistemological relation, says Ford, may also be subsumed under causal participation, since what is known causally affects the knower. So talk of this kind of participation may be in the realm of what Tillich calls technical reason or controlling knowledge (the scientific aspect), or it may come under the heading of receiving knowledge.

(b) INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION signifies the relation of a being to that which it includes. Man participates in the subhuman realm since the physical, biological and psychological levels are found within him. The subhuman realm, Tillich considers, refers to the domain of those creatures who have some, but not all, of the ontological elements. If there is a superhuman realm, then it would refer to those who "transcend the polarity of individuality and universality."⁶⁷

Whereas Tillichian talk of participation and sharing often appears to imply that the inferior shares in the superior, a special application of his term "inclusive participation" is required if it is said that "God participates in his creatures." However, Tillich insists that such statements "can have an unfortunate logical implication that there is something alongside God in which he participates

⁶⁶ S.T., I., p. 237: "Everything finite participates in being-itself and in its infinity. Otherwise it would not have the power of being." "Creatureliness ... carries in itself the power of being, and this power of being is its participation in being-itself, in the creative ground of being" (S.T., I., p. 253). "Only in the power of being-itself is the creature able to resist non-being" (S.T., I., p. 261). See also S.T., I., pp. 231, 250-251.

⁶⁷ S.T., I., p. 260. "Man participates in all levels of life, but he participates fully only in that level of life which he is himself - he has communion only with persons. Communion is

from the outside."⁶⁸ In divine participation, says Tillich, the divine creates that in which it participates. It is very difficult, unless one tries simultaneously to accept and yet not to accept something like the Judaeo-Christian notion of a Transcendent Creator to understand what could possibly be meant by the last statement. It would be scarcely consistent if Tillich meant that God just "creates" in the individual the type of "temple" in which He could dwell. For this would reduce God to a creator-being outside (over against) the creature. It seems to me that the statement that divine omnipotence which Tillich defines as God's "creative participation in the spatial existence of his creatures" is not anymore helpful or clarifying.⁶⁹ Further, if man can only have communion with persons, does this not signify that God is a person?⁷⁰ Of course Tillich would not accept this, since he contends that God is not a being or a person. If we look at the following quotation, comparing it with the previous one, it would seem that we have two statements which are not compatible with one another.

God is not God without universal participation
The divine life participates in everything that is;
he has community with it; he shares its destiny.⁷¹

participation in another completely centered and completely individual self." (S.T., I., p. 176).

⁶⁸S.T., I., p. 245.

⁶⁹S.T., I., p. 277.

⁷⁰S.T., I., p. 176 (quoted above in footnote 67).

⁷¹S.T., I., p. 245.

However, two points may be made. First, all statements about God are necessarily symbolic and hence must not be construed literally; and secondly, in the first quotation, it is God's participation about which Tillich speaks, while in the second, it is the divine life which participates in everything that is.

If it is the divine life that participates in everything there is in this all-inclusive way, we might pause and consider if the divine life participates in non-being, and if so, how and why this occurs. In formulating the inquiry in this way, we must not be led into the confusion of re-ifying non-being, but must remind ourselves that what is meant is the negation of being. Tillich has this to say:

A life process is the more powerful, the more non-being it can include in its self-affirmation, without being destroyed by it. The neurotic can only include a little non-being, the average man a limited amount, the creative man a large amount, God-symbolically speaking-an infinite amount.⁷²

This looks very much like re-ification of non-being. However, it seems to me that the whole concept of God and the divine life needs clarification. Of course, being-itself contains, so to speak, no non-being. It is not threatened, and if God is being-itself, God is not threatened either. It follows that there is a relevant difference.

Tillich might have replied, however, that such critical remarks about Divine participation and Transcendence involve a confusion between God as participant and God's life as participant.

⁷²L.P.J., p. 40.

It must be clearly noted, Tillich would say that it is the divine life, not the divine, that participates in everything. Any statement concerning God himself is, in Tillich's view necessarily symbolic, and hence to offer a definite linguistic explanation of symbolic phrases about God qua God is extremely difficult, if not impossible. But the divine life is apparently something different. Thus, relatively speaking, the divine life can be more directly apprehended by men and they are able to speak about it more directly since the divine life participates in everything, that is, it must share in (participate in) finite life. In the hope of throwing more light, at least indirectly, on Tillich's concepts of Symbolic and Divine participation, I shall allow myself in what follows to let his terminology go largely unquestioned for a while.

Now as the finite life is a mixture of being and the threat to being, the divine life must contain within itself the threat to being (that is, of non-being). Why then is the divine life not overwhelmed as finite life eventually is? Because, says Tillich, the "negativities" (in the finite life) which share in the divine life are "eternally overcome" and this "eternally overcoming is his blessedness."⁷³ The blessedness of God is not his unchanging or unchangeable perfection, (a static God of the type of Aristotle's unmoved mover), but it is constituted by a "perfecting" or a dynamic eternally continuing struggle to overcome non-being, to retain his perfection. Thus, for Tillich, God is "living" and "dynamic," not

⁷³S.T., I., p. 240 and S.T., III, p. 405.

static.⁷⁴ Of course, "Being-itself does not participate in non-being. In this it stands in contrast to every being."⁷⁵

So it would seem that there is tension in the divine life, (though not in God qua being-itself), the tension existing between being and non-being which characterizes finitude. That tension, as we saw in chapter II, is called by Tillich, anxiety. But this tension or anxiety in the divine life is being continually overwhelmed.⁷⁶

Ford interprets the statement "God participates in his creatures" in a very interesting way. He calls it "creative participation" and points out that this kind of participation is the direct opposite of causal participation, for it means "that the cause participates in the effect, rather than the effect in the cause."⁷⁷ It is usually the inferior which "shares in" the superior, and so Ford concludes that this example cannot help us in explaining the way in which a religious symbol functions.

(c) RECEPTIVE PARTICIPATION is made especially prominent by Tillich in expounding what is called his theory of salvation. According to this theory man is accepted by God and then left free to choose whether he will accept the divine offer or reject it. He must be receptive to the offer made before any further progress is

⁷⁴S.T., I., p. 242; cf. S.T., II, p. 175

⁷⁵S.T., I., p. 236.

⁷⁶S.T., III., p. 284, where "otherness" refers to the threat of non-being.

⁷⁷L.S. Ford, op. cit., p. 122.

possible. Then he may move on and take advantage of the power which salvation offers.

Receptive participation, says Ford, signifies openness and sensitivity towards that which is participated in, and so examples such as the knower participating in the known, and the lover participating in the beloved may be cited. The act of knowing is understood dialectically by Tillich; it is a polar relation between union and distance, or between participation and detachment.⁷⁸ Tillich considers that controlling knowledge is predominantly detached from its object, but even in this case, an element of participation tempers the otherwise all-inclusive separation. Receiving knowledge and especially religious knowledge demands the maximum of participation and the minimum of separation, since that which ultimately concerns us "cannot be discovered by detached observation or by conclusions derived from such observation. It is found only in acts of surrender and participation."⁷⁹ One must agree with Ford that this kind of participation is of limited value if applied to concepts used as symbols, since the participant must respond to and become actively engaged with that which is participated in, and this is not caused by symbolic participation. Persons, such as Jesus the Christ fully demonstrate the intensity of response and commitment, but other symbols, such as the sacramental bread and wine, lack this power.

(d) The actual relatedness of a particular (be it a thing or

⁷⁸See Chapter III., Section 2c.

⁷⁹S.T., I., p. 44.

person) to its surroundings is, according to Ford's schema, ENVIRONMENTAL PARTICIPATION. A person is influenced by everything or person external to him. He shares in the society in which he lives, he shares in the persons and things in that society. Tillich refers to what Ford calls environmental participation as the basic ontological structure which contains the polarity of the self-world. Tillich says that the

... self having a world to which it belongs - the highly dialectical structure - logically and experimentally precedes all other structures.⁸⁰

He is, of course, thinking of the subject-object dichotomy. So we may say that which everything participates in, is the self-world polarity. Man not only participates in his environment but is also immediately aware of it. The greater the degree to which man, though shaped considerably by his environment, reacts to it and shapes it in turn, the greater the possibility of his becoming a well developed person. Personal interaction with one's environment involves a response as an agent to persons as well as objects. This type of participation between two persons - (in our scheme this is participating₃) - Tillich terms communion, a word he defines as "participation in another completely centered and completely individual self."⁸¹

But we must be careful not to be misled by Ford's schema. Talk of the self-world polarity may be interpreted to mean that self (or active and passive person) stands over against the world, in a

⁸⁰S.T., I., p. 164.

⁸¹S.T., I., p. 176.

subject-object dichotomy.⁸² Now the man-God relationship is not that of man standing over against God, as subject and object, for this type of connection would make God into a being, standing over against other beings. God is not a being, but the ground of being.

Tillich develops fully this type of participation in his section on the ontological elements of individualization and participation.⁸³ Man, contends Tillich, only becomes fully individual to the extent to which he is able to participate in every dimension of that which surrounds him.

Man participates in all levels of life, but he participates fully only in that level of life which he is himself -- he has communion only with persons. Communion is participation in another completely centered and completely individual self.⁸⁴

The principle underlying the environmental type of participation may be applied to symbols, assisting us to understand the use and power of symbols when contrasted with signs. We have already discussed the fact that signs are conventional; any sign could replace any other if it were found to be more useful. So signs appear to be quite independent of their "environment."

But symbols cannot be replaced in this conventional fashion. Their meanings and connotations are deeply embedded in particular contexts of historical meaning, and it is this participation in their historical environment which has given symbols their rich

⁸²See Ford op. cit., p. 123. See also Chapter III of this study.

⁸³S.T., I., pp. 174-178.

⁸⁴S.T., I., p. 176.

connotations,⁸⁵ as a result of which symbols can not be changed.

Any attempt to remove them would destroy the whole complex of associations which is as much a part of language as direct denotative meanings. It seems that because of these meaning-fulfilments, or the consciousness of a whole system of meanings associated with them that true symbols receive much of their power, a type of innate power resistant to change.⁸⁶

(e) ESSENTIAL PARTICIPATION includes the relation between the particular and the universal as well as the admixture of essential and existential components found in finite being.

The relation between the particular and the universal has had a long history dating back at least to Plato's suggestion in his theory of Forms that a particular "participates" in some sense in the eternal Forms. The ways in which particulars (particularly living organisms) are characterized by both the general and special structures of reality may be "explained" by essential participation. For "this logos is common; every reasonable being participates in

⁸⁵Plato in Cratylus proposed to show "whether the names themselves will bear witness that they are not at all distributed at random but have a certain correctness" (397A). The growth of what Tillich terms "meaning-fulfilment" in the course of the history of language appears to render certain key words resistant to replacement. Any attempt at the replacement of a symbol would have to be resisted if the symbol is to remain adequate. See Richard Robinson, "The Theory of Names in Plato's Cratylus" Revue Internationale de Philosophie IX (1955), pp. 221-236; and Norman Kretzmann, "Plato on the Correctness of Names" American Philosophical Quarterly VIII (1971), 126-138.

⁸⁶I.H., pp. 197-8.

it."⁸⁷

Essential participation may well give us a clue in explaining the intrinsic similarity (in some sense of that word) which a symbol may have to that which it symbolizes. If two things are similar we may take it that they have at least one (but very likely more) property in common. In the case of a symbol it is the symbolized to which the said property primarily belongs and only secondarily to the symbol. So we may think of the symbol participating in the symbolized in some way analogous to the way an imperfect particular "symbolized" the perfect and complete Form in Plato's theory.

The last two classes in Ford's model appear to give at least some hint of how a symbol (particularly a religious symbol) acquires its power in language if most, if not all of its historical connotations direct and focus the thoughts of man on the "depth" of his being. This particular (a symbol) contains through participation in the perfect some influence in directing man to his ultimate concern, the ground of his being.

Ford admits that there are a number of examples of participation that cannot be subsumed under the five classes he mentions. His speaking of "at least five classes" seems to constitute a weakness if he had intended to make a full analysis of the concept of "participation." However, it must be conceded that Ford (in the short space of a journal article) could not be expected to make a comprehensive analysis, but he has shown that Tillich's notion of

⁸⁷S.T., I., p. 23. Here Tillich is speaking of the identity of objective and subjective reason. See also S.T., I., pp. 202-203.

participation needs both clarification and development if we are to grasp the intimate connection between symbols and the depth of reason and between religious symbols and ultimate concern.

Every relation, Tillich asserts, supposes participation of one kind or another. This notion of participation is extended by Tillich to include such relations as indifference and hostility. It seems that his argument might run: if A participates (in some sense of participation) in B, then A is in some way related to B even to the extent of being excluded from B. So it seems that we are required to regard relation as a polar concept of participation and separation in which case, for every class of the four classes of participation which we have proposed, we must include four classes belonging to the other pole namely separation₁, separation₂, separation₃, and separation₄.

IV.6 Symbols and Innate Power.

It is interesting to note that in his earliest writings on the religious symbol, Tillich uses the term "innate power" instead of "participation," as the defining characteristic.

This (innate power) implies that the symbol has a

power inherent within it that distinguishes it from the mere sign which is impotent in itself

This characteristic is decisive for the distinction between a sign and a symbol. The sign is interchangeable at will. It does not arise from necessity, for it has no innate power. The symbol, however, does possess a necessary character. It cannot be exchanged. It can only disappear, when, through dissolution, it loses its innate power. Nor can it be merely constructed; it can only be created This implies that the symbol is socially rooted and socially supported. Hence it is not correct to say that a thing is first a symbol and then gains acceptance; the process of becoming a symbol and the

acceptance of it as a symbol belong together. The act by which a symbol is created is a social act, even though it first springs forth in an individual⁸⁸

Faith, Tillich rightly says, can reach us only through religious symbols⁸⁹ not by intellectual demonstration. Symbols, especially religious symbols, have or should have a power (an effect) which intellectual demonstration often lacks. But religious symbols get their power (or effectiveness) by expressing a faith created, sustained and deepened by creative interaction in the fellowship which has the faith. Tillich states that this is the nature and power (innate power) of the symbol. Thus symbols created through the "social act" reveal their latent power of expressing the faith of the fellowship in the group. In his earlier writings, Tillich was attempting to use "innate" as a defining characteristic. He defended its use by instancing one case: as the use of water in everyday employment cleanses and purifies, so, in its ritual context, water purifies, regenerates and cleanses, at, for example, baptism, birth and death. Its use in ritual is analogous to its use in actual life.⁹⁰ Of course, we all agree that one example is insufficient to formulate a general rule but Tillich does not offer other examples.

However, the problem is not so much the formulation of a

⁸⁸R.E.T., p. 302.

⁸⁹D.F., p.45 "The language of faith is the language of symbols."

⁹⁰P. Tillich, "Symbol and Knowledge" Journal of Liberal Religion, op. cit.

general rule as what meaning can be attached to the word "innate." The word "innate" is defined as "existing in a person (or organism) at birth," or as "belonging to the original or essential constitution; inborn, native, natural."⁹¹ Tillich's contention would be, it seems, that when symbols are (figuratively speaking) "born," they acquired a kind of natural or inborn power that separated any particular symbols from other samples of the material from which they were made. For example, the wooden Cross is alleged to have innate power, while the remainder of the tree from which the Cross was made, has no innate power whatsoever.⁹²

It is well known that one of the great contributors to modern empiricism, John Locke, rejected what he took to be the Cartesian concept of innate ideas, possibly failing to understand Descartes' Aristotelian belief in the generic and specific potentialities, tendencies, principles of development, etc. which characterize different sorts of individuals:

It is established opinion among men, that there are in the understanding certain innate principles ... which the soul receives in its very first being and brings into the world with it I will convince unprejudiced readers of the foolishness of this supposition⁹³

It might be the case that because of a later shift further toward the empiricist tradition, Tillich largely abandoned the adjective

⁹¹See The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary.

⁹²For early historical examples, see Exodus 32 and Isaiah, 44: 15-17.

⁹³John Locke, Essay concerning Human Understanding in Locke's Selections, ed. Sterling P. Lamprecht, (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1928), p. 96.

"innate," falling back upon the noun "participation." In any case, participation is a more universal concept and fits in better with Tillich's ontological structure, for participation and individualization together form one of the ontological elements. Every ontological element is inherent in every being. Every person, though an individual (individualization) must partake in cultural interaction (participation).

It has already been suggested that the participation of symbols in their environment throughout a long history has given to words representing symbols connotations, meanings and associations which make or should make certain key words (representing symbols) much more powerful. In other words, these words, representing symbols, have much more effect in some special context, for example, in the context of ultimate concern. The "power" which these words appear to have in association with "meaning as a whole" and with certain historical events and which make them resistant to replacement, could conceivably be regarded as some kind of "innate power."⁹⁴

IV.7 Levels and Inner Reality: Another Examination.

One of the accompanying characteristics of a symbol refers to the opening up of new levels of reality as well as the unlocking of dimensions and elements in the soul. It is interesting to note that the word "soul" is used by Tillich, a word so reminiscent of the medieval dualism of the physical and the spiritual. But I consider that there is considerable justification for the employment of the

⁹⁴See this chapter, footnote 86.

concept of the soul. Soul is one of the seats of the love due to God that is referred to in the Shema.⁹⁵ Tillich's use of the word "soul" here is very apt for the wants to distinguish between the mind or intellect, and something different designated by the word "soul." In other words, Tillich it seems, wants to separate quite clearly what atheists might agree to call man's spiritual dimension from his intellectual dimension, to separate man's capacities for joy, passion, fear, love, commitment and idealism from his more "dry" capacities, such as to memorize, calculate, learn to play chess, and do semantic analysis.

In the sense that a symbol both "unlocks" and "opens up" the unconscious, Tillich refers to a symbol as "two-edged" or "double edged."⁹⁶ What Tillich means by these two processes, "unlocking" and "opening up," is vividly portrayed in his writings. The portrayal may help to put flesh on the dissected skeletons of the first three sections of this chapter. Tillich alludes to the very deep effect Rilke's poetry had on him and his wife, an effect such that "the poems he wrote became a book of devotion."⁹⁷ Not only did poetry have a powerful effect on him but also music and paintings.⁹⁸

⁹⁵S.T., I., p. 13. It is noted that Tillich does not use the Deuteronomic version (Deut. 6:6) but quotes the New Testament formulation (St. Mark 12:29) which adjures us further to love God "with all your mind." "Ultimate concern" abstractly translates the command to love God, completely, without any reservation, "with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."

⁹⁶T.C., p. 57; S.T., I., p. 240.

⁹⁷I.H., p. 17.

⁹⁸R.S., Part I, Chapters 2 and 3.

The immediate effect of all these forms of culture is not that of "apprehending essence, but that of expressing meaning,"⁹⁹ a concept of great importance to Tillich if his task is "interpretation ... for every new generation."¹⁰⁰ Tillich was quite impressed by the art-form called the "new expressionism" for he says:

Expressionism proper arose with the revolutionary consciousness and revolutionary force. The individual forms of things were dissolved, not in favor of subjective impressions, but in favor of objective metaphysical expression. The Abyss of Being was to be evoked in lines, colors and plastic forms.¹⁰¹

Acting as symbols, these art-forms, poetry, painting, and music are extremely effective in producing through their aesthetic appeal "deep" feelings that a person is often unable to experience in any other way. If any art-form displays this power of producing emotional inner feelings and thoughts, then that art-form is said by Tillich to have a genuinely symbolic character.¹⁰² It is quite possible that art-forms once experienced have effects which penetrate even deeper and deeper into the soul of man, pointing to his ultimate concern,¹⁰³ or perhaps the "Abyss of meaning,"¹⁰⁴ or to the immanent God. If the "pointing" of these symbols is to the divine, then they could be

⁹⁹R.S., p. 85.

¹⁰⁰S.T., I., p. 3.

¹⁰¹R.S., p. 87.

¹⁰²T.C., p. 57.

¹⁰³T.C., p. 6.

¹⁰⁴I.H., p. 50.

designated religious symbols. If not, these works of art are still symbols, but remain at the secular level. Thus even these secular symbols "open up" depths which would otherwise never be opened, and so an important aspect of reality would never be enjoyed.

The concept of "depth" may be employed in either a literal sense or a metaphorical sense. In the literal sense, it is a spatial term, sometimes associated with length and breadth, in which case, it is more usual to use the term "height" instead of the word "depth." Figuratively speaking, "depth" is often used to express profundity. Talk about the "depth of the self" refers to what is most profound and precious in a person, his "inward part." Psychology of the deepest inner self, Tillich would say, especially when related to the tension between that pair of ontological elements denoted by individualization - participation, is termed "depth psychology."¹⁰⁵

The metaphors of height and depth are very familiar in religious language. The psalmist and Isaiah use both these terms and they are found frequently in the New Testament. Though the words "depth" and "height" appear to be antithetical in meaning, they can actually be used to stress or point vividly to one and the same referent, the distance between two places. The decision to use one or the other of these terms depends upon the standpoint of the observer. Of course, "height" is used if the thing stressed is distance above the "eye of the beholder," and "depth" if it is distance below the eyeline. So the Psalmist could talk of the "waters

¹⁰⁵S.T., I., pp. 96 and 199; Cf. P. Tillich, "Existentialism and Psychotherapy" Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry I., (No. 1, 1961), 8-16.

being afraid and the depths troubled." For Tillich "depth" symbolizes the inmost and deep character of reality. He tells us that by using "deepest depth" he refers to the "ground of being" or the "ground of meaning" or the "power of being," for "depth" is an apt word to use in certain situations. While "unknown height" seems to have a connotation of limitedness, the term "unfathomable depth" has, not only a greater intensity or power of meaning than "unknown depth," but also appears to have no limit in a downward direction. "Unfathomable height" is not only an odd combination of words but may be a contradiction of terms for "fathomable" is related by measure to "depth" and should not be coupled with the word "height."

IV.8 Other Characteristics.

The remaining characteristics of symbols, namely those referring to their unintentional production, their periodicity and their integrating power, although viewed by Tillich as important characteristics, do not pose the same expository problems and so I have included them in this one section. The facts that symbols may change in popularity and use over periods of time, that they have an integrating power in the minds of those who use them and that they cannot be produced intentionally, appear to present few conceptual problems.

Symbols cannot be produced intentionally. Because symbols permit man to delve into other dimensions of reality, they must have a relation to reality, and in fact, they may be produced by a creative encounter with some aspect of reality. When a symbol is accepted by a group, it will remain a symbol just so long as it can

perform the task that it was expected to perform. Should any person consciously - at the superficial level of mere conscious and arbitrary choice - attempt to invent a symbol, the effort will prove a failure. For, says Tillich, an entity can "become a symbol only if the unconscious of a group say 'yes' to it."¹⁰⁶ In other words, no individual can decide whether an entity shall be accepted as a symbol for, says Tillich, it "must be accepted unconsciously by a group, and in that acceptance alone, it ranks as a symbol."¹⁰⁷

Concerning the periodicity of symbols, Tillich writes:

Symbols grow and die. They are born out of the womb which is usually called today the "group unconscious" or "collective unconscious" out of a group which acknowledges, in this thing, this word, this flag or whatever it may be, its own being.¹⁰⁸

A symbol only continues to function as long as it retains its meaning for a group. As soon as the symbol ceases to be efficacious, as soon as it ceases to have meaning for that group, the symbol is counted as "dead."

In one of his later writings, Tillich asserts that a symbol has "integrating and disintegrating power -- both to individuals and groups."¹⁰⁹ The integrating power of a symbol, sometimes called its "healing" power, is able to produce an "elevating, quieting and stabilizing" situation. Conversely, symbols may have a disintegrating

¹⁰⁶T.C., p. 58.

¹⁰⁷D.F., p. 43.

¹⁰⁸T.C., p. 58.

¹⁰⁹R.E.T., p. 5.

effect, causing anxiety, producing depression or just restlessness. Both these types of effects can be produced in individuals or on groups. Examples of symbols which should be able to "integrate" individuals or groups are a king, or head of state, or a leader of a group or society, an epic work, a holy book, etc. As cases of symbols with disintegrating power, Tillich cites the Fuhrer and the Swastika, human sacrifices, or any type of doctrinal symbol which, for the group, has "died," like the symbol "Virgin Mary" for a Protestant sect, causing a split consciousness. We must never look upon a symbolic word as "only a symbol" or as just a symbolic item.

IV.9 Summary.

Tillich's account of signs, (needed to make the term "symbol" intelligible, which in turn is needed to make his claim to represent a still relevant form of Christianity plausible) lacks clarity. It would, perhaps, have been unrealistic to expect Tillich, however gifted and sincere, to have been completely clear-headed about "signs," "meanings," "symbols" etc. at a time when the philosophy of language as practised by full-time semanticists and linguists still abounds - if their comments on one another are to be believed - with so much confusion and so many conflicting intuitions of experts.¹¹⁰

Sometimes the examination of unclear ideas in a major thinker

¹¹⁰Consider, for example, J.R. Searle's scathing comments of his predecessors and contemporaries, in his book Speech Acts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969). See also Zeno Vendler, Linguistics in Philosophy (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), Chapter I.

yields an initial impression that the apparent confusions are prohibitively thick, and that any search will lead nowhere. However Tillich's writings with his great insights, contemplation and reflection do lead to something philosophically and religiously fruitful. Whether Tillich would have accepted the conclusions which I hope to reach cannot now be ascertained, but it will be agreed that he was a spokesman for both Christianity and for Jesus as the Christ, even though he agreed that he accepted the label of ecstatic naturalist.¹¹¹

At any rate, although we have suggested that Tillich's views on signs and on their characteristics have not been clearly formulated in full, we considered that some semi-formal unpacking is helpful.¹¹² This has been attempted in section II.

Next we tried to explicate the characteristics of Tillichian symbols at considerable length, and we have noted that the defining characteristic is genuinely exciting but too often elusive, namely

¹¹¹The idea of Tillich as an ecstatic naturalist will be explored in Chapter VII.

¹¹²W.L. Rowe, op. cit., has also attempted an un-packing (p. 110): x is a sign of y just in case:
 (a) x signifies y;
 (b) the relation of signification that x has to y is conventional, and
 (c) x may be replaced by something else as a sign for y for reasons of mere expediency.

On p. 102 he writes: According to the first interpretation ... "pointing to" is to be understood as referring, and the meaning of a word, in a given context of utterance, is to be identified with that to which the word refers in that context. According to the second view ... "pointing to" is to be understood as signifying, and the meaning of a word is not to be identified with its referent." Rowe considers the first view as untenable. Rowe considers that Tillich means "directing our attention to," or "indicating" when he uses "pointing to."

that which he calls "participation." This term has been partially analyzed and we have reduced the kinds of Tillichian participation to four in number, examples of all of which should be able to be found in our earthly existence. The accompanying characteristics of symbols have been enunciated. Defining characteristics are those characteristics without which a thing would not be labelled by a certain word while those characteristics of a thing without which the word referring to the thing would still apply to it are its accompanying characteristics. So for something to be a symbol it must point to and participate in some form or another in the symbolized, but it need only have some, but not all, of the characteristics mentioned.

In the next chapter, I shall attempt to apply Tillich's views on symbols in general to his concept of religious symbols and to consider the relation between religious symbols and secular symbols in the development of his theological thought.

CHAPTER V

NON-RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS AND RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS

Eight characteristics of symbols were discussed in the previous chapter. However, it must be stressed that the crucial characteristics of a symbol are (i) it must point to something and (ii) it must participate (in some sense of "participate") in that to which it points. These two criteria constitute the defining characteristics of a symbol.

Tillich does not seem to have distinguished carefully enough between (a) Referring (Denoting) signs and symbols and Statemental signs and symbols and Psycho-evocative signs and symbols or between (b) Actual signs and symbols and Potential signs and symbols, or between (c) Individual signs and symbols and Collective signs and symbols. Elaborating, we might say: (i) this is a sign because, by itself, it can be used to refer to something, denote something, etc.; (ii) this is a sign because it is commonly used to refer to something, etc.; (iii) this is a sign because it can be used to state something, etc.; (iv) this is a sign because it is commonly used to evoke... and (v) this is a semi-sign because in certain contexts there are rules whereby it can be combined with other semi-signs in order to function as a sign as in (i), (ii), (iii), and (iv).

Of the other six characteristics which were mentioned in the previous chapter, not all symbols will exhibit in the same context,

all of the six accompanying characteristics. Some will display one or more of these six in a more potent form or in a more rigorous manner than the others. In other words, some symbols in some contexts appear to have one or more of the accompanying characteristics to an outstanding degree.¹

In his discussion of symbols, Tillich describes three classes: secular symbols, religious symbols and non-religious symbols, though, we shall see, there is considerable perplexity about the relation between secular symbols and religious symbols. However, before we delve into the confusions which may occur between the use of the term "secular symbol" and the use of the term "religious symbol," a look at the meanings of the words "secular" and "religious" as ordinarily used is of primary importance.

From Webster's New World Dictionary, it will be found that secular means "of or belonging to the World or Worldly things as distinguished from the church and religious affairs; not sacred or religious." This, I think, would be accepted as the everyday usage or connotation of the word "secular." If we accept this, then there should be no difficulty in distinguishing between the word "secular" and the word "religious." But Tillich does not at first accept this

¹It would appear that in the use of symbols generally the accompanying characteristics of unintentional production, living and dying, and perceptibility are seldom mentioned again. Tillich seems to concentrate on the two features of "opening up levels of reality" and "unlocking levels of our interior 'perception,'" especially in the case of secular symbols stemming from the Arts. Examples will be found, more particularly in The Religious Situation, pp. 85-101. In the case of religious symbols, a new feature called the "affirmation and negation" factor, responsible for integration (and disintegration) is more prominent. This feature is dealt with later in this study.

definition culled from an American dictionary. After he had found that, using the word "secular" as he was using it, considerable confusion was caused in the minds of his readers, Tillich reverted to the ordinary usage of "secular." He was using the word "secular," as we shall see, for a class of symbols which was a sub-class of religious symbols, and the word "non-religious" qualified symbols which, in ordinary everyday usage, we shall call "secular." As we have mentioned, in his later writings he rectified this, and classified symbols into two classes, "religious" and "non-religious or secular."² I shall dwell on this change in Section 1 of this chapter.

Before exploring Tillich's concept of the religious symbol in any detail, we must consider both words in the term "religious symbol." The term "religious symbol" brings together the connotations of both "religious" and "symbol." The characteristics, functions and range of the word "symbol" and the actual symbol were discussed in the previous chapter. The term "religious" or "religion" has, for Tillich, two major meanings. Tillich does not regard religion as being concerned only with some special function of a man's life, often called spiritual to distinguish it from the material. He believes that religion is concerned with man's whole life, as the title of one of his books (Theology of Culture) indicates. Religion for Tillich is "the

²It is interesting to note that The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary defines "secular" as "of or pertaining to the world" without reference to "religious" while the definition of "religious" makes no mention of the word "secular." See Ninian Smart, Reasons and Faith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958), for symbolic and ritualistic strands especially pp. 131, 197f and 200; Also his Dialogue of Religions (London: S.C.M. Press, 1960), pp. 128f.

dimension of depth in all its functions."³ The metaphor "depth" means, in this connotation, that "the religious aspect points to that which is ultimate, infinite, unconditional in man's spiritual life."⁴

The two major senses of the word "religion" are denoted by Tillich as the broader or larger sense of the term, and the narrower sense of the word "religion."

If religion is defined as a state of "being grasped by an ultimate concern" - which is also my definition of faith - then we must distinguish this as a universal or large concept from our usual smaller concept of religion which supposes an organized group with its clergy, scriptures and dogma, by which a set of symbols for the ultimate concern is introduced and cultivated in life and thought. This is religion in the narrower sense of the word, while religion defined as "ultimate concern" is religion in the larger sense of the word.⁵

So Tillich distinguishes between the broader sense of the meaning of "religion" as "being grasped by an ultimate concern" and the narrower sense in which it has reference to what might very roughly be termed a church, that is, to religion in the everyday traditional sense.

The relation between these two concepts is that the broader or larger one has reference to an Absolute beyond religion or non-religion in

³T.C., pp. 5f.

⁴T.C., p. 7. The term "depth" is used in two main ways in Tillich's writings. He makes reference to God as the "depth," the "Abyss" and "Ground." When man is the point of reference, the word "depth" is usually associated with his "depth of reason." This phrase "depth of reason" suggests a "digging down" or a devling into one's spiritual self, in an attempt to reach or to understand and clarify our very serious and passionate concern. Reason requires revelation, according to Tillich, before any chance of success is possible. The revelation of the "depth of reason" is the counterpart of Hegel's ontological synthesis, which Hegel once called "The revelation of the depth of spiritual life" (Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind, trans. J.B. Baillie, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1967), p. 808.

⁵U.C., p. 4.

any form, while the narrower concept of religion refers to an Absolute "in a direct concrete symbolization."⁶ This seems to suggest a very peculiar way of separating the two strands in religion. In the one case, all that matters is the (or an) ultimate concern, whether it be religious (in the everyday use of the word) or whether it is not. But an "infinite passion" for that ultimate concern (religious or not) is a necessary condition. On the other hand if "x is the object of ultimate concern" just means that "x is the object of a general religious attitude," then we have both (i) a circular account of religion and (ii) an arbitrary stipulation of what "religion" means. The relationship between these two concepts of religion has important repercussions in the life of the human individual. This relation will be discussed later.

V.1. The Secular Symbol.

To designate symbols which form part of or are ingredients of religion in the broad sense but not in the narrower sense, that is, where "religion" is used only to refer to an absolute commitment to some vision, principle or aspect of reality adjudged worthy of ultimate or very serious concern in a Way of Life, not necessarily a Christian Way of Life, Tillich, at least in his earlier writings, uses the term "secular symbols."⁷ But religious symbols are also symbols which Tillich employs in connection with his very broad use

⁶P. Tillich, My Search for Absolutes (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), pp. 131-132.

⁷P. Tillich, Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), pp. 4f, and 7.

of "religion" to refer to an absolute commitment to any object of ultimate concern. Hence, using the criterion which Tillich has given, it would seem that secular symbols and religious symbols belong to the same class of symbols. However, possibly because it must have seemed quite odd, at least in English, to say that what is secular could be identified with what is religious, Tillich came, as was mentioned earlier, to qualify his earlier criterion and limited the use of the term "secular symbols" to contexts of absolute commitment or ultimate concern or what was considered to be ultimate concern in relation to what he terms "quasi-religious ideologies." In the printed version of his dialogues with students, he says:

This is why in my little book, Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions I have discussed the concept of quasi-religious-ideologies, such as nationalism or socialism, which claim the loyalty or veneration of their followers with the intensity sometimes of the theistic religions. This term "quasi-religion" would be meaningless if we defined religion solely in the smaller narrower sense of the word. But in the light of the larger concept we can understand that ultimate concern is also present in what we usually call the secular or profane.⁸

⁸U.C., pp. 405. The quasi-religious groups include communist groups, for whom the ultimate concern is the highest tenets of communism, and the national socialist group in Germany in 1930-40. In both these instances, a good case could be made out to argue that their followers have a "greater intensity" of purpose than many sects of a theistic religion. Yet it is interesting that Tillich says, when speaking of Fascism and Communism as quasi-religions, "However, let us not have any doubts about ourselves. Ours is a quasi-religious system too." (P. Tillich, My Search for Absolutes, op. cit., p. 135.) In case it appears that there is a contradiction between this quotation from Tillich and the statement that Tillich regards Christianity as one of the true religions (Cf. Footnote 9) it must be stated that the word "ours" in the above quotation does not refer to Christianity, but to the third political-cultural system which Tillich labels "liberal humanism." He writes: "This system has fought in the name of its absolutes, liberalism and humanism, against the other two absolutes, Fascism and Communism. It has conquered the first, at least so far, and continues to oppose the other. The superiority of our

The idea of ultimacy in the phrase "ultimate concern" in the broadest sense of its use, may be said to demand the total commitment and surrender of him who accepts the claim; in return he is promised total fulfilment even if other extremely important claims are either rejected or made subordinate to it. If the communists accept the ideal of communism as the proper object of ultimate concern, all concerns for other goals, for example, concerns about one's physical health or personal friends or family life must be considered secondary and subordinate: the object of such (secular) ultimate concerns must come first. This, for Tillich, is partly a matter of definition - since the concern ceases to be ultimate if it is not predominant for the agent. It is also, I infer, a matter of prescription. Tillich is saying, implicitly at least, that if one judges something to be worthy of ultimate concern, then one ought as a matter of personal authenticity not to let concern for that become one concern among others in what I earlier called the "Same level" or "Same value" sense of "among." The precise contents of the political ideologists' promises may never be made explicit, but are often expressed in secular symbols; an example would be talk about an alleged pure Communist "millennium" to whose creation present values should be subordinate, or talk about an alleged "Master Race," to which all other races ought to be

system is its attempt to find a way that bypasses, on the one hand, the self-negating absolute of relativism and, on the other, the demonized absolutes of Fascism and Communism. Its absolute is most impressively embodied in the Constitution, which permeates all our lives. A delicate balance has been achieved between this basic absolute and an almost limitless relativity; but we should recognize that this balance is always threatened." (Ibid.)

subordinated.

By widening the term "ultimate concern" to include passionate commitment to quasi-religions, and by assuming that we agree with Tillich that Christianity is one of the true religions⁹ because of its superior revelation¹⁰, we can now try to separate secular symbols (symbols of quasi-religions) from religious symbols (symbols of the Christian religion). This would bring the meaning of "secular" more in line with the lexicon's definition: "of or belonging to the world and worldly things as distinguished from church and religious affairs." Both in his writings about the religious symbol and in those about the holy, Tillich contrasts the religious and the secular.¹¹ But this must not be taken to mean that there is any clear-cut dichotomy here, for he writes:

Nothing is essentially and inescapably secular. Everything has a dimension of depth, and in the moment in which the third dimension is actualized, holiness appears. Everything secular is potentially sacred, open to consecration.¹²

⁹P. Tillich, "My Search for Absolutes" op. cit., pp. 136-141. The true religions are Judaism, Christianity and Islam, because they are the ones which "pose the decisive problem of a universal claim to absoluteness on the part of a particular religion" (p. 138).

¹⁰Because the revelation through Jesus as the Christ, and the anti-demonic symbol of the Cross, Tillich regards the "event" as the centre of history, as well as the criterion by which all other revelations, whether Christian or otherwise are to be judged. See S.T., I., pp. 150-151; S.T., III., pp. 338 and 367.

¹¹Cf. S.T., I., p. 217. "The second contrast to the holy is the secular." All religious symbols are regarded as holy, whether genuine or demonic. Hence it would seem that "secular" in this context, would refer to symbols which are not used in so-called religious services, such as, for example, small figures of certain saints as symbols of "good luck" or reverting to Tillichian examples, the flag or king of a nation.

¹²S.T., I., p. 218.

So we see that after all, Tillich finally decides to approach much nearer to the usual usage of the word, at the same time, differentiating quite explicitly, the use of "secular" and "religious."

The secular is the realm of preliminary concerns. It lacks ultimate concern; it lacks holiness. All finite relations are in themselves secular. None of this is holy.... The holy embraces itself and the secular....¹³

Secular symbols, then, according to this standard of using "secular," pertain to non-ultimate concerns, or to what a group may falsely regard as a worthy object of ultimate concern for them. However, in order to clear up the whole ambiguity, Tillich, after the first volume of Systematic Theology was written (1951), decided to equate "secular symbols" with "non-religious symbols" or use the word "secular" for things of or belonging to the world.¹⁴

V.2. Non-religious symbols.

Non-religious symbols are symbols which point to and share in some part of reality, which may be a thing, an aspect, or even something imagined, that appears in the spatio-temporal framework, and hence will be limited and conditioned.¹⁵ Non-religious symbols, then, are said to belong within one or more of the proper functions or spheres of reason. The spheres of reason are identified by Tillich as the cognitive, aesthetic, personal, communal and political functions,

¹³S.T., I., p. 218.

¹⁴Especially in D.F. (published 1957) and U.C., p. 87 (published 1965).

¹⁵See D.F., p. 53. Tillich refers to "artistic symbols." See also R.S., Part I, Chapter 3. But non-religious symbols, because they are symbols, can "open up new depths" of reality.

and also the sphere of language and the historical dimensions of rational-cultural existence.¹⁶ So the non-religious symbol must refer to something which is within the subject-object structure, and which may or may not be actually experienced.

These non-religious symbols may refer to what might be termed a "cultural content," that is to say to the content of one of the spheres of reason enumerated above. The "place" of these non-religious symbols is within the participating, emotion-related categories, that is, they are found more in the so-called connative-affective side of language-use and found less in the so-called "value-neutral" uses to refer, to state or to evoke what is unlikely to make "blood boil." Hence their value is perceived in the aesthetic and the societal sections. It is in mythology that the union of the cognitive and aesthetic functions is most fully expressed.¹⁷ These symbols occur "objectively" in the cultural content, with art, with culture, with society and language. Their use or value occurs subjectively through perception and not through abstract cognition. If we think of symbols or of any cultural contents as existing objectively, apart from any subjective interaction with them, then we would be misunderstanding Tillich's position. The material content of a symbol may exist apart from conscious subjects. These materials may exist in the inorganic, organic, or pre-objectified psychological dimensions. For example, pieces of cloth of various colours may be regarded as the physical content, but

¹⁶ S.T., I., pp. 89-90.

¹⁷ S.T., I., p. 91. "The union of the cognitive and aesthetic functions is fully expressed in mythology."

put together in a special way, this content becomes a flag, symbol of a nation's prestige. The cloth has concrete objective existence, which when put in a pattern and when it has the approval of the collective consciousness of a group, becomes a symbol. Thus the objective existence of a symbol in "cultural" space, is an abstraction. It is a symbol insofar as it is carried within and emerging from the collective and unconscious self-actualization of the group. The symbol as subjectively enjoyed is another abstraction.

That from which both the symbol's finite objective spatiality and the symbol's infinite subjective position are abstracted, is the vital process in which spiritual beings and cultural objects are synthesized, separated, and once again re-synthesized as power and meaning. The symbol need not be consciously and subjectively perceived at any instant in order to continue in existence. Of course, in the final analysis, there could be no symbol apart from the subjective side of the process, and apart from its status within the dimensions involved within the group unconscious, since it becomes merely a concept when it is objectified.¹⁸

The non-religious symbol is found everywhere in the cultural aspect of the world. These symbols are found in paintings, music, sculpture, poetry and literature. These are particularly potent in opening up new and deeper levels of (inner) reality, thereby hinting at new levels (or depths) of meaning. It is not impossible for non-religious symbols to suggest ideas which direct a person towards God, since, in the last analysis, all symbols, and indeed all concrete

¹⁸S.T., III., pp. 254 and 409-411.

matter "declareth his handiwork."

V.3. The Religious Symbol.

We have already noted that the term "religious" (and hence its cognates) is ambiguous. "Religion" in the broad sense, relevant to my investigation here, or what Tillich would himself often consider to be the basic and universal sense, means the state of "being grasped by ultimate concern." "Religion" in a much narrower way can be used characteristically to refer to the sectarian setting of experiences of the holy - experiences arising in a particular presence, place or time and in connection with a ritual act, spoken word or sacramental object. These experiences are usually found in the unity of an organized sacramental community, usually called a church or a religious movement. This type of community expresses the character of the holy experiences in its own special symbols, in cult, ritual and special regulations for the determination and regulation of its ethical and social life. Such a community offers a sectarian setting which is religion in a narrow sense.¹⁹

What, we may inquire, is the relation between a symbol and a religious symbol. Tillich offers this answer to us.

Religious symbols do exactly the same thing as all symbols do - namely, they open up a level of reality which otherwise is not opened at all, which is hidden. We can call this the depth dimension of reality which is the ground of every other dimension and every other depth, and which therefore, is not one level beside the others but is the fundamental level, the level below all other levels, the level of being - itself, or the ultimate power of being.²⁰

¹⁹Cf. U.C. p. 4. See also William R. Rowe, Religious Symbols and God (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), pp. 140-141.

²⁰T.C., pp. 58-59.

It is interesting at this juncture to note the absence of explicit mention of the two defining characteristics of a symbol as asserted by Tillich. The pointing characteristic (which is a characteristic of a sign also) and the "participation" criterion are not mentioned explicitly. This seems quite peculiar. However, the pointing characteristic, but not the participation characteristic, is mentioned in the following quotation:

The religious symbol has a special character in that it points to the ultimate level of being, to ultimate reality, to meaning itself. That which is the ground of being is the object to which the religious symbol points. It points to that which is of ultimate concern to us, to that which is infinitely meaningful and unconditionally valid. Religious experience is the experience of that which concerns us ultimately. The content of this experience is expressed in religious symbols.²¹

Two statements in the above quotation are of special interest, because they delineate the boundary between religious symbols and non-religious symbols. A religious symbol points to Being-itself, and the concrete content of the experience of that which concerns man ultimately is given in the form of the religious symbol.²²

Every concrete concern is probably conditioned. That is, there is always a mixture of finite elements, interests, or psychological motives that makes it questionable. But here again we are making the mistake of considering the content. We must be able logically to distinguish the concept of ultimate concern and the content of ultimate concern.²³

Now we appear to have two ways of distinguishing religious symbols

²¹Paul Tillich, "Theology and Symbolism" op. cit., pp. 109-110.

²²See Rowe, op. cit., pp. 129-130.

²³U.C., pp. 21-22.

from other symbols. These are, first, the "pointing" way, which we will designate the external way, and second, the way emphasizing the concrete content of the experience (the "inner" experience) of that which concerns man ultimately and is expressed in religious symbols. We will call this the internal way. Perhaps the terms "objective" and "subjective" do not always mean the same thing to different philosophers.

A religious symbol is said by Tillich to be one which points to Being-itself. Being-itself is not a being, not even the Highest or Most Supreme Being. Being-itself is "beyond" (in some sense or senses of "beyond") space and time, essence and existence.²⁴ So if we find, by some method or another, that a symbol points to (signifies) some finite existing object or points to some particular object that once existed, or to some limited content or category, then it would follow, using Tillich's external criterion, that it could not be a religious symbol.

This appears straight-forward enough. But we sense a possible difficulty when we notice that Tillich states that "devotion to the crucifix is really directed to the crucifixion on Golgotha," or as we may say, I think, that the devotion to the crucifix is really devotion to the content of the crucifixion. Let us look at a larger slice of the quotation from which the short quotation recorded above is taken:

²⁴By "beyond" here, I mean that being-itself is not limited in any way as are finite beings. However, this means that being-itself cannot be concrete, and so may be equated with the ultimate in God. But Tillich must and he does account for a concrete element in God. For a full discussion of this problem, see W.L. Rowe, op. cit., pp. 35-37.

Devotion to the crucifix is really directed to the crucifixion on Golgotha, and devotion to the latter is in reality intended for the redemptive action of God, which is itself a symbolic expression for an experience of what concerns us ultimately.²⁵

Now the question arises, "May the crucifix pointing as it does to the crucifixion be classed as a religious symbol?" Our first impression would be to answer this question in the negative, if we are thinking of the crucifixion of the man Jesus son of Mary and Joseph, since this crucifixion did take place in space and time. But if we are thinking of the theological event of the crucifixion of Jesus as the Christ, then this is something of a different order. A further rather important distinction, I think, could be considered were we to ask if the external criterion requires that the "object" to which a religious symbol points is wholly outside the space-time matrix or not wholly inside?²⁶

To avoid any confusion in deciding similar cases, let us extend Tillich's definition and state that a religious symbol is a

²⁵P. Tillich, "The Religious Symbol" R.E.T., p. 301. Cf. W.L. Rowe, op. cit., p. 131.

²⁶Whether the redemptive action of God would be considered not wholly inside the space-time matrix or wholly outside it is a very complicated issue, and would require a very careful analysis of S.T., II., Part III Section II E 2-4, pp. 168-176. On page 174 Tillich states that "the justice of God is an act through which he lets the self-destructive consequences of existential estrangement go their way" and that "God's atoning activity must be understood as his participation in existential estrangement and its self-destructive consequences." If the "existential estrangement" refers to existence₁, then it is outside the space-time matrix. However, I think that Tillich would want to say that the justice of God is immanently active in the world now, that is, in existence₂. But this would not necessarily mean that the action was wholly within the space-time matrix. See Chapter VI of this study. Cf. also R.E.T., pp. 8f and pp. 314-318; T.C., pp. 61-64; D.F., pp. 45-48; S.T., I., pp. 222-230.

symbol, which points to, or signifies, or refers us to the one proper object of our ultimate concern, Being-itself, either directly or indirectly.²⁷

Even with this emendation, two very different kinds of perplexities confront us. One concerns the "ultimate" referent of any religious symbol. What does it mean for a religious symbol "to point to" the object of ultimate concern, Being itself? It is relatively clear what is meant by "A pointing to B" if A is a finger and B a particular, finite material thing, that is, if both A and B are things which belong to the spatio-temporal world. But how are we to justify the "pointing" of a religious symbol to Being-itself? What is Being-itself? This problem will be discussed in the next chapter.

The other problem arises because Tillich makes a very vague and peculiar reference to those symbols which are not classed as religious. Tillich states:

All other symbols either stand for something that has also an unsymbolic objective existence aside from its ideal significance as, for example, a flag can represent a king, and the king in turn represents the state; or they are the forms giving expression to an invisible thing that has no existence except in symbols, as, for example, cultural creation like words of art, scientific concepts, and legal forms. It is only in symbolic fashion that such intangible things as these can be given expression at all.²⁸

²⁷ By "directly or indirectly" I mean that religious symbols are those which either point without any intermediate symbol to God or Being-itself, or which point to a symbol of a higher order or level. This is dealt with in this chapter, section V.5. Or as W.L. Rowe says: "One could say that first-order religious symbols point to Being-itself, second-order religious symbols point to first order ones, n-order religious symbols point to n-1 order religious symbols." W.L. Rowe, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

²⁸ R.E.T., p. 303.

The peculiar phrase "expression of an invisible thing that has no existence except in symbols" surely needs clarification. It is possible, (though not very relevant to say so), to consider the Divine as an "invisible" thing without existence, (in some meaning of existence), except through symbolic language. But this is obviously not what Tillich means. If by any chance he did then "all other symbols" would be "religious symbols" and we have a contradiction. Is Tillich referring to an invisible thing devoid of any ontological status? He is not referring to God, who is beyond existence. It must be that Tillich means here something conditioned and limited, existent in some way, yet not directly perceived by the senses. Perhaps it might be suggested the universals would fill the bill, or concepts like Beauty itself, or Justice itself. Neither Beauty nor Justice are material things, but Tillich does assign to these concepts, and to the concepts of power and love, ontological status, for he refers to the ontological unity of justice, love and power.²⁹ Or we might be reminded of the distinction which we considered in Chapter II between existence₁ (certainly not directly perceived by the senses) and the limited conditioned life designated by us, existence₂.

The external way of distinguishing religious symbols from non-religious symbols rests on the claim that religious symbols point to being-itself. This criterion, it would seem, has to be used in a negative way. Being-itself is real, but it does not appear to be an object existing in the world. Hence, if we find a symbol which does point to some existing object in this world, either directly or

²⁹L.P.J., pp. 67-71.

indirectly, that symbol would not be regarded as being a religious symbol. But this does not mean that, should we be unable to find an object to which a symbol points, therefore it must be pointing to being-itself. This criterion merely distinguishes non-religious symbols from everything else.

The internal (subjective) method distinguishes religious symbols from non-religious symbols in terms of the way in which they are experienced since being-itself is that which is of ultimate concern to us. If we are to obtain a clearer grasp of this subjective way, the concept of "ultimate concern" offers, it seems, more promise than the concept of "being-itself."

V.4. Ultimate Concern.

In his everyday life, the dealings of existent₂ man within intramundane things assume many concrete aspects: "having something to do with something, producing something, consuming something, abandoning something or letting it get lost, undertaking, accomplishing, inquiring, questioning, considering, talking over, determining...."³⁰ So we see man's interest in things, his concern for them. It is reasonable to say that man's everyday life is characterized by concern, for his concern for things (and people) is not just an occasional feature of his being, but is a feature which essentially is part of him. Though he may stop producing something, abandoning something etc., he never ceases to be a concerned being. Being aware of his finitude, man becomes concerned about his own being and the threat

³⁰ M. Heidegger, Being and Time trans. John MacQuarrie and Edward Robinson, (London: S.C.M. Press, 1962), p. 83.

of not-being, and, theologically speaking, it is then but a short step to the question of God, a being or "something" able to give the courage to be to relieve the anxiety, and so man is led to the "object" of his ultimate concern.

For Tillich, ultimate concern is derived from the abstract translation of the authoritative order which says: "you shall love the Lord you God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."³¹ Thus, "ultimate concern" is equivalent to "utter devotion" and "complete commitment." This means that our devotion and commitment are not partial; they must not be divided between God and something else. The demand of this commandment, it is seen, requires that the whole of man's personality shall be involved.³²

The term "concern," as we have just noticed, means, for Tillich, "utter devotion" and "complete commitment." But "concern" embraces more than this. It means involvement and participation, but it also means uneasiness and anxiety, and in addition an awareness of not possessing. When we are anxious and concerned, we recognize that there is a danger of losing, a risk of failure, a doubt concerning our ability. We are anxious about our own being; we are concerned about the threat of non-being; we are worried by our separation from that to which we essentially belong; we doubt if we can

³¹S.T., I., p. 11; Tillich refers the reader to Mark 12:29 (R.S.V.)

³²Tillich calls this total involvement a "centered act." "Faith as ultimate concern is an act of the total personality" (D.F., p. 4).

find assistance.³³ However, Alston has pointed out that Tillich is using the term "ultimate concern" in at least two different senses.³⁴ But as Rowe very properly insists, this ambiguity does not lead Tillich into any mistakes and it should not lead us to make any.³⁵

Ultimate concern, since it has ultimacy, both (a) demands the total surrender of him who accepts the claim and (b) promises total fulfillment.³⁶ Being an act of the total personality, the human mind finds in a genuinely ultimate concern a center, a focus of meaningfulness,³⁷ and whatever it is that concerns one ultimately becomes holy.³⁸ For the meaning of "holy," Tillich accepts Otto's phenomenological description. The awareness of the holy is the awareness of a presence "which remains mysterious in spite of its appearance, and it exercises both an attractive and repulsive function on those who encounter it."³⁹ So a holy object is experienced with very deep mixed feelings of dread,

³³See S.T., I., p. 14. "Man is ultimately concerned about his being and meaning," and "Man is infinitely concerned about the infinity to which he belongs, from which he is separated, and for which he is longing."

³⁴W.P. Alston, R.E.T., p. 20: "First, 'Man is ultimately concerned about his being and meaning' in the sense of 'concern' in which it means something like 'being worried about' or 'being anxious about.' ('I am concerned about his state of health.') But this is a quite different sense from that which Tillich has given to the phrase 'ultimate concern.' Surely Tillich is not suggesting that we are worried about the fate or condition of being-itself!"

³⁵Cf. W.L. Rowe, op. cit., p. 21.

³⁶D.F., p. 1.

³⁷D.F., p. 4.

³⁸D.F., p. 12.

³⁹D.F., p. 13.

of awe, of reverence and of mystery, and yet man is irresistably attracted to it, and repelled from it. Tillich asserts that these feelings are not just peculiar to the Christian religion but are to be found in all religions, "because they are the way in which man always encounters the representation of his ultimate concern."⁴⁰ The relation of our minds to the Ultimate and the mystery attached to it Otto expresses using two terms: "tremendum" - that which produces trembling, fear and awe; and "fascinosum" - that which produces fascination, attraction and desire. Man's unconditional awe and unconditional attraction of the holy seem to remind one of the threat of missing one's possible fulfillment -- the dread of missing one's fulfillment is "awe" in Otto's terms, and the desire to reach one's fulfillment is "attraction."⁴¹

On different occasions, Tillich attaches a number of terms to the words "ultimate concern" and three in particular should be carefully noted: matters, vehicles, and objects. It seems that almost anything may become a matter of ultimate concern.⁴² Tillich believes that in the early period of Hitler's rule over Germany, some Nazis made the German nation a matter of ultimate concern. But we must distinguish this notion from what Tillich terms a vehicle of ultimate

⁴⁰D.F., p. 13.

⁴¹Rudolf Otto, The Idea of the Holy, trans. John W. Harvey (New York: Galaxy Books, 1958), Chapters III and IV. When Tillich says "what concerns one ultimately becomes holy," (D.F., pp. 12-13) "holy" in this sense does not refer to moral perfection, but to the awareness of a numinous presence as phenomenologically described by Otto. See also S.T., I., pp. 214-215.

⁴²See, for example, S.T., I., p. 28, and S.T., II., p. 30.

concern. Again, it seems that anything may, theoretically, become a vehicle of ultimate concern, but there is a subtle difference between a vehicle of ultimate concern and a matter of ultimate concern. It would seem that Tillich is using the word "vehicle" to indicate a religious symbol, and as anything (theoretically) may become a religious symbol, anything may be a vehicle of ultimate concern.⁴³ But what is important is that neither of these terms must be confused with the object of ultimate concern. While the tenets of communism or of fascism may become matters of, or even vehicles of ultimate concern, they can never be equated with the object of ultimate concern, since no "thing" can be the object of ultimate concern unless it "determines our being and non-being."⁴⁴

According to Tillich, every human being has "something" which is either a matter of, or a vehicle of, or object of, ultimate

⁴³ See, for example, S.T., I., p. 216: "A nation which looks upon itself as holy is correct in so far as everything can become a vehicle of man's ultimate concern, but the nation is incorrect in so far as it considers itself to be inherently holy." I consider that Tillich here means that anything can in principle become a vehicle of man's ultimate concern provided that the symbol is transparent to the Ground of being, or reveals to man the ground of his being.

⁴⁴ S.T., I., p. 14. Here again it is worth, as earlier in this chapter, distinguishing a definitional or conceptual theme of Tillich's from a closely associated prescriptive theme. According to the first theme, one cannot be said on pain of contradiction to have any finite object or any particular set of continuing events (which is the dream of some ideologist like Hitler or even Marx) as the real object of ultimate concern. Only something unlimited or "unconditioned" can be the real object of ultimate concern for a clear-headed, rational person. According to the second theme, the prescriptive theme, man debases himself and his faculties when he tries to direct the energies and emotions appropriate only to glorifying Being-Itself towards the glorification of mere beings.

concern.⁴⁵ These terms, "matter of," "vehicle of," or "object of" do not necessarily exclude one another, as we have seen. That to which human beings have directed their very serious concern has varied enormously -- supranatural beings, human beings (Jesus, Caesar, Buddha), nations, social classes, political movements, cultural forms, etc.⁴⁶

As Rowe states:

For given our explication of 'ultimate concern,' it seems reasonable to believe that almost anything could be an object of ultimate concern. At least it is true that human beings and movements (e.g. communism) qualify as objects of ultimate concern. But this creates a difficulty in our attempt to understand what 'God' means for Tillich. For Tillich wishes to equate God with whatever is the object of man's ultimate concern.⁴⁷

While we can agree that Tillich wishes to equate the object of man's ultimate concern with God, we cannot agree with Rowe that "anything could become an object of ultimate concern." If, however, Rowe means that anything could become a matter of, or vehicle of, ultimate concern, then we are in agreement. However, we might concede that men may regard anything as an object of a spurious concern, a concern

⁴⁵ Since everyone has an ultimate concern, this means that everyone is grasped by the holy. As Tillich says: (see U.C., pp. 27-28) "And my thesis is that everyone experiences it at some time or place, although often it is hard to discover, for oneself or for others. But it is my experience that among all the human beings I have ever met - quite a few! - I have never found anybody who had nothing which he took with unconditioned seriousness. There was always something. The ultimate experiment, perhaps, is to find out from the cynic who says to you, 'I don't take anything seriously,' what he actually does take seriously; sometimes it is his glory in cynicism, or possibly his despair in it. Since I know this qualitatively different concern in myself, I can perhaps see it or recognize it also in others. If one has never recognized it in oneself, even though it is there, it is hard to recognize in others."

⁴⁶ S.T., II., p. 116; U.C., pp. 9-11, 20 and 24.

⁴⁷ W.L. Rowe, op. cit., p. 13.

which they even may (mistakenly) regard as ultimate, but this concern would be but a preliminary concern. It might appear that Tillich is saying that there are no possibilities of mutual encounter between ultimate concerns and preliminary ones,⁴⁸ but I would consider this a mistake. It seems to me that there are three possible relations of preliminary concerns to ultimate concerns; (a) where the ultimate concern is debased and is placed on the same level as preliminary concerns, thereby losing its ultimacy, there could be a relation of a sort of indifference, since the former ultimate concern is now one among many. This is profanization;⁴⁹ (b) where the preliminary concern is elevated to the status of ultimate concern. This is idolatry;⁵⁰ (c) where the relation between the two is an acceptable relation, that is, "the one in which a preliminary concern becomes a vehicle of the ultimate concern without claiming ultimacy for itself."⁵¹ If this type of relation occurs, the preliminary concern is not indifferently related, nor is it elevated to ultimate status, but acts like a symbol pointing to the object of ultimate concern. Such

⁴⁸S.T., I., p. 12.

⁴⁹S.T., I., p. 218; S.T., III., pp. 87f, and 98. Profanization is the reduction of the transcendent holy to the finite.

⁵⁰S.T., I., p. 13. "Idolatry is the elevation of a primary concern to ultimacy." See also T.C., p. 60: "Idolatry is nothing else than the absolutizing of symbols of the Holy and making them identical with the Holy itself."

⁵¹The concept of the demonic invades the very history of the truly ultimate. Tillich's favourite example is the case of 20th century nationalism wherein everything is centered in the nation as god. "The demonic self-elevation of one nation over against all others in the name of her God or system of values produces the reactions of other nations in the name of their God" (S.T., III., p. 103).

is the position that allows Tillich to affirm that objects of art, social ideas and actions, political programs etc., can become "objects of theology." This is not because of anything inherent in their own structure, but from the point of view of their ability to express some aspects of that which concerns us ultimately.⁵² However, these finite "objects" can never become an object of ultimate concern.

We have already indicated that anything in principle may become a vehicle of ultimate concern. Tillich, in his analysis of the main forms of culture, language, art and philosophy, shows that all these forms contribute to our understanding or perhaps intuition of the object of genuine ultimate concern. Language, he writes, is the basic cultural creation, the expression of "man's freedom from the given situation and its concrete demands."⁵³ Religious language is not some supranaturally received communication, but human language based on man's encounter with reality, through which he tries to express and communicate ultimate concern, either directly as is found in myth and symbol or indirectly through its style.⁵⁴ While language is not holy in itself, it can become "holy for those to whom it expresses

⁵² S.T., I., p. 13. "In and through every preliminary concern the ultimate concern can actualize itself."

⁵³ T.C., pp. 42 and 47. Cf. S.T., I., p. 170.

⁵⁴ By style, Tillich means a concrete experience of depth which is characteristic of an age or group. Its most important application is perhaps in the medium of art, but it has a broader application. Style is the "immediate expression" of ultimate concern, qualifying "the many creations of a period in a unique way" and pointing to "a self-interpretation of man" and the "ultimate concern of a human group or period" (T.C., pp. 42 and 70).

their ultimate concern from generation to generation."⁵⁵

If, as Tillich suggests, the style of any cultural period expresses that period's ultimate concern, then the style of a language as actually employed would be the place to look for some indication of both the religious substance or ultimate concern.⁵⁶

Of course Tillich does not want God or Being-itself classed with any finite object or movement.⁵⁷ So in order that our ultimate concern shall refer to that which is genuinely ultimate, Tillich must say that (a) a person can be genuinely ultimately concerned only about Being-itself, or that (b) among all the possible ultimate concerns which may be available, the only appropriate one is the one through which we are committed etc., to Being-itself.⁵⁸

A considerable amount of evidence can be adduced to support (a). The main criterion is explicitly stated:

⁵⁵ T.C., p. 48. Cf. P. Tillich, "The Word of God" in Language: An Enquiry into Its Meaning and Function ed. Ruth Nanda Anshem, Science of Culture Series 3, (New York: Harper Bros., 1957), pp. 122-133, especially pp. 123, 125, and 127.

⁵⁶ For Tillich's analysis of artistic style and the relation of art to religion and ultimate concern, see T.C., pp. 70-75, and P. Tillich, "Existential Aspects of Modern Art," Christianity and the Existentialists ed. Carl Michalson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), p. 133: "If you want to know what is the ultimate self-interpretation of a historical period, you must ask, 'What kind of style is present in the artistic creations of the period.' Artistic 'style is the over-all form, which, in the particular forms of every particular artist and of every particular school is still visible as the over-all form; and this over-all form is the expression of that which unconsciously is present in this period as its self-interpretation, as the answer to the question of the ultimate meaning of existence.'"

⁵⁷ See Chapter VI, Section 3.

⁵⁸ Cf. footnote 44.

... that which concerns us ultimately must belong to reality as a whole; it must belong to being. Otherwise we could not encounter it, and it could not concern us. Of course, it cannot be one being among others; then it would not concern us infinitely. It must be the ground of our being, that which determines our being and non-being, the ultimate and unconditioned power of being.⁵⁹

So anything less than ultimate cannot be of ultimate concern, and the object of ultimate concern can only be the ground of being, namely being-itself. We may be quite deeply concerned about many things, but "nothing which by its very nature is finite can rightly become a matter of ultimate concern."⁶⁰

If nothing finite can be or become the object of ultimate concern, one probably wonders how any confusion could arise concerning this concept of ultimate concern. I consider that there are a number of built-in factors which might contribute to this vagueness and uncertainty. We might look at two reasons for the confusions which have arisen. First, I think, Tillich himself is not blameless. He uses the phrase "ultimate concern" when it might have been better to substitute phrases like "very serious concern" or "passionate concern" or even "misplaced ultimate concern."⁶¹ He might have used the terms he himself introduced, namely, "matters of" and "vehicles of" with more

⁵⁹S.T., I., p. 11.

⁶⁰U.C., p. 24. Tillich also refers to "ultimate concern" by the Kierkegaardian phrase "infinitely interested passion." See U.C., p. 26; S. Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, *op. cit.*, pp. 32 and 33. See also D.F., p. 9, where Tillich says that "the infinite passion... is the passion for the infinite." I would suggest that the quotation would have been clarified by the use of the word "object" instead of "matter."

⁶¹See, for example, U.C., pp. 24 and 26.

consistency,⁶² and reserved "ultimate concern" for that state of faith which is directed to Being-itself, and Being-itself alone. Secondly, serving under the conditions of existence we are even more centered in this confusion. The object of our ultimate concern is unchanged and unchangeable, but our concept of "Being-itself" is subject to our frailty in finitude. Particularly we might have difficulty with the ambiguity inherent in the word "holy" and also in the word "faith." Tillich states that "faith is the state of being ultimately concerned"⁶³ and "what concerns us ultimately becomes holy."⁶⁴ The use of the word "faith" and the use of the word "holy" are clear enough in these quotations. But then he writes:

The holy which is demonic, or ultimately destructible, is identical with the content of idolatrous faith. Idolatrous faith is still faith. The holy, which is demonic, is still holy.... The danger of faith is idolatry and the ambiguity of the holy is its demonic possibility. Our ultimate concern can destroy us as it can heal us. But we can never be without it.⁶⁵

The terms "holy" and "faith" are very closely connected to the concept of "being ultimately concerned," that is, the state of our concern and that which concerns us. It is obvious that some of the conditions which apply to the word "holy" cannot apply to the object of genuine ultimate concern. The object of ultimate concern must, of course, be holy, but not demonically holy. The object of our ultimate concern surely would not destroy us, since "only that which is holy can give

⁶²As, for example, in the quotation referred to in footnote 60.

⁶³D.F., p. 1.

⁶⁴D.F., p. 12.

⁶⁵D.F., p. 16.

man ultimate concern, and only that which gives man ultimate concern has the quality of holiness,"⁶⁶ and holiness here is used in the non-demonic sense. But here is the insidious subtlety: "holiness provokes idolatry."⁶⁷

It might be suggested that we must recognize two different "dimensions" or "levels." The object of ultimate concern, God, must be holy, that is genuinely holy, just as he must be infinite and ultimate. The state of being concerned is a human state, and hence, since it is a human state, it is subject to the conditions of existence. The ambiguity is due to the finite condition of man, a condition such that he may regard something as the object of faith to which his whole consciousness may be devoted. And yet, though this person may think so, his devotion is not directed to Being-itself, and thus his adoration and homage, his faith, (the state of being concerned) is idolatrous, and this is what is destroying. But this faith is still faith, even though, because of human frailty, it is not recognized for what it is -- demonically oriented. This is man's greatest danger; but we must accept this risk of faith.

Dorothy Emmet has something very pertinent to say about this difficulty:

This is partly because this logical and metaphysical problem gets involved for Tillich with the psychological and personalist problem of people's "ultimate concern." And, since he holds that everyone has some ultimate concern, even, as it emerged, the Teddy Boy for his Ma, we are told that everyone is religious, and the discussion becomes a psychological one,

⁶⁶S.T., I., p. 215.

⁶⁷S.T., I., p. 216.

with the meaning of "religious" standing for any serious anxiety or concern. Tillich's corrective to this, is of course, to say that all "ultimate concerns" which stop short of the ground of being are religious, but idolatrously religious.⁶⁸

Not only is there a kind of tension in the concepts of the "holy" and of "faith," but there is a built-in tension in the very experiencing of being ultimately concerned.

The phrase "being ultimately concerned" points to a tension in human experience. On the one hand, it is impossible to be concerned about something which cannot be encountered concretely.... On the other hand, ultimate concern must transcend every preliminary finite and concrete concern. It must transcend the whole realm of finitude in order to be the answer to the question implied in finitude. But in transcending the finite the religious concern loses the concreteness of a being-to-being relationship. It tends to become not only absolute but also abstract, provoking reactions from the concrete element. This is the inescapable tension in the idea of God.⁶⁹

Superficially, at least, we have a contradiction here. On the one hand, a person can be ultimately concerned only about something concrete, but on the other hand, a person can be ultimately concerned only about that which transcends every concrete concern.

Man in his quest for "something" which is able to overcome the threat of non-being, and yet is itself not affected, accepts being-itself as the object of ultimate concern. But since man is able or may be able to encounter being-itself only through something concrete, his seeking for infinite being must be focussed on something concrete that "participates" in the power of being, and through

⁶⁸ Dorothy Emmet, "Ambiguities in the Concept of God," R.E.T., p. 252.

⁶⁹ S.T., I., p. 211.

which the power of being and meaning can be experienced. The "concrete" something is, of course, the religious symbol.

We have already mentioned that if the metaphysical ontological ultimate claims ultimacy, then "it" is able to make two demands on him who accepts the claim. W.P. Alston suggests that Tillich may have been misled by the linguistic ambiguity contained in the term "ultimate" or "ultimacy."

... As Tillich explained 'ultimate concern,' the ultimacy is psychological; it consists in the supremacy of that concern in the psychic structure of the individual. It is in a quite different way that being-itself is thought of by Tillich to be ultimate. It is the ontologically ultimate by virtue of the fact that it is the ultimate ground of being. Once this distinction is made, we can see that there is no reason to suppose that (psychologically) ultimate concern must be concern directed to what is (ontologically) ultimate. But the verbal identity may make the transition seem obvious.⁷⁰

Alston is correct in drawing our attention to the two aspects: the psychological ultimate referring to the deepest, most vital aspect of concern in the human individual himself, and the ontological or metaphysical Absolute or ultimate which is the proper object of such concern. Whether or not Tillich is sometimes misled about ultimacy, (I would doubt very much that he frequently or systematically was),⁷¹ we must not be misled. Psychologically speaking, concern to be rightly directed as ultimate or unconditioned concern must be directed to what is itself unconditioned, God or Being-itself. Ontologically speaking, what is rightly taken to be ultimate cannot be value-neutral as in the ontologies of the positivists. The fact that Tillich's ontology does

⁷⁰W.P. Alston, R.E.T., pp. 20-21. See also Chapter VI, section 4 which makes it clear why Tillich would not permit one to analyze the subjective side independently.

⁷¹No ambiguity is seen in the use of "ultimate" or "ultimacy" in Tillich's wording in, for example, the following passages" S.T., I., pp. 110, 220, 221 and 273.

contain value-laden material shows that Alston is not entirely right in thinking that Tillich envisages a complete logical gap between the two sorts of ultimateness. Of course if Alston is interpreting "supremacy of that concern in the psychic structure of the individual" purely and wholly in terms of overt behaviour, then it is possible to conceive of a man making anything whatsoever his ultimate (psychological) concern, in which case, that person may conceive of a distinct gap between the two alleged ultimates.

However, in the light of Tillich's criterion that our ultimate concern is connected with our being and not-being, it would seem that whatever is of "supremacy... in the psychic structure of the individual" must be connected with concern about being and not-being. The two concerns (not necessarily ultimate), the psychological and the ontological, may be viewed as forming a polar concept, the whole forming a symbol directed to the only appropriate object of ultimate concern, being-itself.

Tillich does not appear to give any account of any psychological ultimate. He does point out very clearly that (a) "revelation always is a subjective and an objective event in strict interdependence,"⁷² and (b) "revelation is the manifestation of what concerns us ultimately."⁷³ So revelation cannot be defined in purely subjective terms, that is, in terms wholly concerned with the psychic state of the person experiencing revelation. It is also clear that the

⁷² S.T., I., p. 111.

⁷³ S.T., I., p. 110.

subjective side of revelation is ecstasy.⁷⁴ Revelation involves miracle, mystery and ecstasy, but is not reducible to any of these. "Ecstasy is cognitive, not a merely subjective state of religious overexcitement: 'something' happens objectively as well as subjectively in every genuine manifestation of the mystery."⁷⁵ There is, however, an objectively based overexcitement which is not ecstasy. It is demonic possession that destroys the ethical and logical principles of reason; divine ecstasy affirms them.⁷⁶

Tillich's concept of "ecstatic reason" may be correlated with Schleiermacher's "feeling of absolute dependence." Tillich has shown his annoyance at the traditional belief that Schleiermacher removed religion from intellectual consideration to the realm of psychological feeling.⁷⁷ Tillich insists that theology must get back to Schleiermacher's position that feeling is the awareness of the Unconditioned (Being-itself) which Schleiermacher got from his Moravian education and from Spinoza and Schelling. In one passage, Tillich specifically says that his own presentation of "ultimate concern about the ground and meaning of our being" corresponds to Schleiermacher's

⁷⁴ S.T., I., pp. 111-112: "'Ecstasy' points to a state of mind which is extraordinary in the sense that the mind transcends its ordinary situation. Ecstasy is not a negation of reason; it is the state of mind beyond itself, that is, beyond the subject-object structure."

⁷⁵ John King-Farlow, "Miracles: Nowell-Smith's Analysis and Tillich's Phenomenology" International Philosophical Quarterly II, (1962), 284.

⁷⁶ Cf. S.T., I., p. 114.

⁷⁷ S.T., I., p. 15.

"feeling of absolute dependence."⁷⁸ We apprehend God as the "infinite and unconditional power of being" immediately and ecstatically.

"Ecstasy as a state of mind is the exact correlate to self-transcendence as the state of reality."⁷⁹

Tillich's irritation with anything like a substitute for or correlative of an ontological ultimate does not seem to support Alston's contention. It would seem that perhaps Tillich has in mind a type of polar concept (showing all the tensions of polar concepts) of ecstatic reason (psychological) on the one pole, and the objective (ontological) pole on the other. Perhaps we ought to concede that Alston does refer to "doubts about the soundness of the argument."⁸⁰

Tillich's way of assigning religious faith a special status is different from that of either James or Kierkegaard. It is based on his conception of faith as "ultimate concern." The contents of "ultimate concern" include the following:

- (a) The nature of things is so teleological and value-laden that each person has a natural vocation to show ultimate concern for the appropriate object - that is, to be ready and willing to surrender himself completely, body, soul, and "spirit" to the proper object of ultimate concern, Being-itself or the Divine.
- (b) Man violates his nature and material obligations when he tries to project his capacity for ultimate concern towards inappropriate, finite goals.
- (c) Man may expect that he will receive fulfillment through the Divine-human encounter. This involves the fulfillment of what falls under the complex concept of "salvation."

⁷⁸ S.T., I., pp. 41-42.

⁷⁹ S.T., II., p. 8.

⁸⁰ W.P. Alston, op. cit., p. 21.

- (d) The proper object of ultimate concern is considered as "holy," and any understanding of this proper object must be mediated through concrete religious symbols, also regarded as "holy," perhaps in a different sense.
- (e) The ultimate concern of a group (psychologically speaking) stands for that vast complex of attitudes, feelings, and thoughts that are common to a group and are most intense and precious to the individuals of a relatively healthy group. These feelings etc., are directed by accepted sacred objects to the one great Ultimate, Being-itself (or whatever term that group happens to use to signify the Absolute).

Or, more concisely,

1. An unconditioned surrender to something, x; the willingness to recognize x as holding absolute "authority" over one's life.
2. An expectation that one will somehow receive a supreme fulfillment through one's encounter and participation with x.
3. Finding in x a center of meaningfulness. That is, everything in one's life and one's world takes on significance insofar as it is related in some way to x.
4. Experiencing x as holy.⁸¹

These elements of ultimate concern are the very elements which may be used to distinguish religious symbols from non-religious symbols, using both the external (objective) and the internal (psychological or subjective) methods. A symbol is a religious symbol if and only if it is genuinely acting as a focus of the object of ultimate concern. In other words, acting as a focus of the object of ultimate concern is a necessary and sufficient condition for a thing's being a religious symbol whether that thing be a person, idea or material thing; -- that is, whether the thing be appropriate for fully religious attitudes or not.

It seems to me that what has been said about ultimate concern

⁸¹Cf. W.P. Alston, R.E.T., p. 19.

and the relation of religious symbols to it, we are now able to distinguish between what are called "quasi-religious symbols" and genuine "religious symbols." Quasi-religions or ideologies should not be called pseudo-religions, because "there is much genuine passion, commitment and faith in them."⁸² Quasi-religious symbols appear to meet all the requirements of the internal (psychological or subjective) criterion, but they fail to meet the external (objective) criterion of directing or pointing to the genuine object of ultimate concern, Being-itself. Tillich, after discussing the quasi-religions (Fascism in general, Nazism in particular and Communism) reminds us that we should "not have any doubt about ourselves. Ours is a quasi-religious system also."⁸³ However, it should be noted that the word "ours" refers to what Tillich calls "liberal humanism," a political-cultural system. Further, I think that Tillich is issuing a warning here not to regard his system as an object of ultimate concern, but as a symbol focussing our attention on the genuine object of ultimate concern, Being-itself. He is very anxious that this symbol (his system) shall not become demonized.

V.5. The Levels of Religious Symbols.

The religious symbol with which we are principally concerned

⁸²P. Tillich, My Search for Absolutes, p. 137.

⁸³Ibid., p. 135. This system, "quasi-religious in nature" may be called "liberal humanism." "This system has fought in the name of its absolutes, liberalism and humanism, against the other two absolutes, Fascism and Communism. It has conquered the first, at least so far, and continues to oppose the other. The superiority of our system is its attempt to find a way that bypasses, on the one hand, the self-negating absolute of relativism and, on the other, the demonized absolutes of Fascism and Communism."

is the "fundamental symbol of our ultimate concern," namely the religious symbol "God." It is distinguished from all other symbols in that this symbol "God," according to Tillich's analysis, has always remained on the "primary" level. The symbol "God" is the symbol which, for man, establishes the possibility of a divine-human encounter. The pressing question seems to be: "how is essentialized man restored to the Ground of his being?" Tillich admits the legitimacy of the question, but he backs away from any direct answer. On this very point Tillich writes:

In as much as we have been pushed by the consistency of thought as well as by the religious expression in which fulfilment is anticipated to the identification of Life Eternal with the Divine Life it is appropriate to ask about the relation of the Divine Life to the life of the creature in the state of essentialization or in Eternal Life. Such a question is unavoidable, as the history of Christian thought shows, and impossible to answer except in terms of the highest religious-poetic symbolism.⁸⁴

On the middle level, the "sacramental-incarnational" level of religious symbolism, we find a union of transcendence and immanence. This level indicates, in later historical periods, the way in which the primitive mind once encountered transcendence, present in or "mixed" in differing types of concrete things, for example, things as different as totem poles, graven images, and even swans. Gradually a "separating-out" occurred, and the transcendent aspect was elevated to what is termed sign-symbols.⁸⁵ These sign-symbols occur on the lowest level of liturgical words and phrases, and these sign-events have difficulty in maintaining any contact at all in the religious

⁸⁴ S.T., III., p. 421.

⁸⁵ T.C., p. 65.

community. Symbols such as the "cube," the window-shapes of a three-leaved clover, the sign of the fish, and many others have lost touch: in Tillich's words, these symbols are dead.

Not only does Tillich say that the fundamental symbol of our ultimate concern is the human concept of "God," but he also speaks of

the basic and all embracing symbol of religion, namely the symbol of God. In relation to creation, He is creator; in relation to salvation, He is savior; in relation to fulfillment, He is the eternal. We lead from different points and with different keys to the central symbol.⁸⁶

The relation of all religious symbols to this central symbol, "God," is of extreme importance. With this relation in view, we will examine Tillich's classification for religious symbols into "types."⁸⁷ In Tillich's more usual terminology, these "types" are called "levels."

V.5a. Differing Perspectives of Levels

Tillich distinguishes the levels of the religious symbol from what appears to be two very different aspects. From the aspect of the potency and religious centrality of the religious symbol, Tillich makes a distinction between "primary" and "secondary" symbols.⁸⁸ Tillich calls the primary level the supporting level because the religious symbols belonging to the level support the religious life.⁸⁹ These primary religious symbols, (also called objective religious symbols)

⁸⁶ P. Tillich, "Existential Analysis and Religious Symbols," Four Existential Theologians ed. Will Herberg, (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958), p. 291.

⁸⁷ P. Tillich, R.E.T., p. 314.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Cf. W.L. Rowe, op. cit., pp. 171-172.

establish in the life of the religious group, the concrete objectivity of the divine so that man himself may somehow encounter the divine being. Examples of these "objective" symbols are "God" and "the Christ." The secondary level of symbols is distinguished as a level of "pointing" symbols. Symbols on this level are merely "sign-symbols," and are themselves supported by the first level, and by the religious life generally. Such things as liturgical acts and the crucifix are sign-symbols of this level. In that this level of sign-symbols points to the primary, objective and supporting symbols on the first level, Tillich calls such sign-symbols "self-transcending," though in an early and weak sense of that term.⁹⁰

Instead of considering the potency of religious symbols as a basis for levels, Tillich experiments with the historically oriented distinction between transcendence and immanence. Using this distinction between transcendent levels and immanent levels, Tillich finds that some religious symbols which on the potency scale would be placed in the primary level, are, on this perspective, placed in the secondary, immanent or lower level. The immanent level, for example, includes "all appearances of the divine in time and space." This implies, of course, all "incarnations of the divine," which must include New Being in Jesus when he became the Christ.⁹¹ But the Christ from

⁹⁰P. Tillich, "The Religious Symbol" trans. by J.L. Adams and E. Fraenkel, Symbolism in Religion and Literature ed. Rollo May, (New York: 1960), pp. 89-94. Cf. T.C., pp. 64ff. In the strong and now standard sense, it is the primary symbols which are self-transcending." For the concrete objectivity which they establish is somehow "bottomless," "transparent," or self-transcending towards the divine depths.

⁹¹T.C., pp. 63f; Cf. S.T., II., pp. 118f.

the viewpoint of potency would be included in the primary level.

V.5b. A Synthesis of Levels.

In this section, we will present a composite picture of the two perspectives dealt with in the last section together with the numerous references in other places to levels of religious symbols. As just one example, we might mention another attempt by Tillich to solve the peculiar situation which caused the symbol Jesus to be placed on the very lowest level. The scheme mentioned but not fully worked out, consisted of three levels, called the "transcendent," "sacramental," and "liturgical" levels of religious symbols. The middle level includes the incarnations of the divine, whereas the lowest level consisted of the "vast realm of sign-symbols."⁹² It seems that the scheme of this third attempt by Tillich to produce a satisfactory classification is the scheme best suited for our synthesis. We shall, therefore, use the same appellations for each of the three classes or levels of religious symbols.

(a) The Transcendent or the Ultimate Level.

Three subsections of this class of transcendent symbols will be needed to deal fully with this level. The three subsections will deal with the various facets of the concept of God.

(i) The symbol "God."

Prior to what Tillich calls "the breaking of the myth,"⁹³ the

⁹²P. Tillich, "Theology and Symbolism," op. cit., pp. 113-115.

⁹³S.T., I., pp. 222-3. By the "breaking of the myth," Tillich refers to the change from polytheism to monotheism. In polytheism, the myths, (Tillich defines myth as "stories of the gods") are to be interpreted in a literal sense, but in monotheism, myths are to be

primitive consciousness recognized what we have termed the ultimate level as one consisting of a "world" of divine beings. After what Tillich refers to as "the breaking of the myth," the divine beings found themselves under the power of a Highest Being, or Supreme Being, or any synonym which would denote a "transcendent" God. After another historical period, this Highest Being became the One and Only True God, and the satellite divine beings disappeared. This concept of a Supreme Being remained as an idea of a transcendent-immanent God, which appears to be identical with what Tillich terms "the theistic idea of God."⁹⁴ The word "God" involves a two-fold meaning: it connotes a transcendent or ultimate Being, and it also means an "object" somehow endowed with qualities and actions. These latter two, namely the attributes and qualities applied to the God of theism, and the actions of the God of theism constitute the other two subsections.

(ii) Attributes and Qualities applied to God.

The attributes and qualities which are applied to God are mainly, love, mercy, justice, power and goodness. These attributes and qualities are, of course, finitely experienced, and in their perfected state applied to God.

(iii) Actions of God.

Any action of God, as far as we are concerned, must employ the categories of finitude. The actions of God always occur in the

interpreted symbolically. Symbols have always been present in myths, but after the "breaking of the myth," symbols were recognized in their own right, and though concrete, represented and referred to the supreme symbol "God."

⁹⁴C.B., p. 182.

space-time matrix, and include the thought of God causing things, of sending his only Son, - in general, ideas about His omnipresence and His omniscience.⁹⁵

(b) The Middle or "Sacramental" Level.

This level might be termed the "sacramental-incarnational" level, in order to subsume under this middle level, statements drawn from different contexts. Many of the symbols in the sub-class are the "natural and historical objects that are drawn as holy objects into the sphere of religious objects and thus become religious symbols."⁹⁶ This level also contains "the realm of divine manifestations in finite reality, divine incarnations in holy objects and things."⁹⁷ This level is considered by Tillich, to be the oldest level of religious symbolism, for in it are mixed, quite indiscriminately, immanence and transcendence. The coalescing of these two concepts of transcendence and immanence, is instanced in the Indonesian doctrine of "Mana."

In the Indonesian doctrine of "Mana," that mystical Power which permeates all reality, we have some divine presence which is both immanent in everything as a hidden power, and at the same time transcendent, something which can be grasped only through very difficult ritual activities known to the priest.⁹⁸

Out of this pre-mythical, incarnational sacramental presence of the divine, three distinct patterns appear. First, there is the realm of

⁹⁵P. Tillich, "Theology and Symbolism," op. cit., pp. 113-114; R.E.T., pp. 8f and pp. 314-318; T.C., pp. 61-64; D.F., pp. 45-48, S.T., I., pp. 222-230.

⁹⁶R.E.T., p. 316.

⁹⁷R.E.T., p. 9.

⁹⁸T.C., pp. 63-64; Cf. S.T., I., p. 222.

the mythological Gods, in which realm the language of myth predominated. Following the breaking of the myth, and after a transitional period in which a re-orientation in the consciousness of the group occurred, the emergence of a monarchical God and later an Absolute God changed the whole pattern of thought and worship.⁹⁹ The main problem for man in the change from immanent divine gods to one transcendent Absolute God was the remoteness of the Divine, and hence the desire for something to counterbalance this loss of personal contact with the one, absolute and righteously demanding God. So a concrete, sacramental element in incarnations became desirable so that once again man may still encounter his transcendent deity.¹⁰⁰

(iii) The Level of Liturgical Symbols.

The liturgical symbols or sign-symbols originally contained a great mass of gestures as well as illustrative symbols. Tillich appears to be uncertain whether members of this group are really symbols at all, and he is somewhat inconsistent in his analysis of them. Tillich states that these sign-symbols were once no more than signs, but because of their continued use in religious context, they were elevated to the status of sign-symbols.¹⁰¹ In another context, contrariwise, Tillich considers that this group belonged to the primary (or "objective") symbols, which have continued to lose their potency and are now either "dead" or "very sick," with little chance of

⁹⁹T.C., pp. 63-64; Cf. S.T., I., p. 222.

¹⁰⁰T.C., pp. 63f; S.T., I., pp. 222f.

¹⁰¹T.C., p. 65.

survival.¹⁰² There is perhaps some truth in both these suppositions about sign-symbols, for Tillich, in one of his latest pronouncements says that "these secondary religious symbols had once an independent standing as primary religious symbols and vice versa."¹⁰³

We perceive then, in the religious symbolic hierarchy, that the symbol "God," the central symbol of a transcendent level, stands at the very apex of a cone of religious symbols. This all-important symbol has been "distilled out" of a mass of mythical human-divine encounters, and points to or is the concrete representative of the transcendent, unconditioned and absolute God. But "God" is also the name given to the object of man's ultimate concern, and because man cannot be concerned about something which is not concrete, the tension of remoteness and concreteness is very real. The idea of God and the structure of ultimate concern are the same in embodying a tension between the tendency towards ultimacy which can become infinitely abstract, and a tendency towards concreteness which could render human-divine relations a mere commonplace.¹⁰⁴

V.6 Summary.

In this chapter, I have studied the relationship between secular symbols, non-religious symbols, and religious symbols. The difficulty found in the clarification of the relationship of secular symbols and religious symbols was, at least to some degree, solved by

¹⁰² R.E.T., pp. 319f.

¹⁰³ R.E.T., p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ S.T., I., pp. 211-215.

equating secular symbols with quasi-religious symbols, only to find that Tillich suggests that the Christian symbols might be quasi-religious symbols. We cannot say that secular symbols are "of this world," because all symbols, it seems, are "of this world."

The symbols of the Christian religion point to or are representative of the supreme symbol "God," the symbol which is at the head of a hierarchy of lesser religious symbols.

Having considered among other topics the connection between preliminary concerns and ultimate concern, we will, in the next chapter, discuss the most difficult and most elusive of the three foci, man, symbols and God. Of course, we recognize that an important feature of Tillich's understanding of the concept of "God" is that the divine cannot be confronted and even regarded (in any direct sense) as one thing or object among others (at least not if we are using "among" to express what I have called Same Level and Same Value amongness). God may be accepted only as the object of man's genuine ultimate concern. So now we must discuss the relationship between "the basic theological question" (the question of God), the "ontological question" (What is Being-itself?) and the ontological structure. In more detail, we want to examine the relationships between (a) beings and Being, (b) Being and Being-itself, (c) Being-itself and God, (d) God and the Supranatural.

CHAPTER VI

BEING, GOD, AND THE REFERENT OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS

For many centuries attempts have been made to establish a relation between philosophy and Christian theology. To determine the relationship, some would say, the exact definition of both "philosophy" and "theology" should be decided upon. Failing this, it might appear that each philosopher and each theologian ought to offer some kind of stipulative or arbitrary definition of these terms before using them.

But both the demand for an exact definition of "philosophy" and "theology" and the notion that any arbitrary definition is as good as any other, show remarkable ignorance of the philosophy of language. Many useful words like "game," as Wittgenstein tried to show, may indeed have no exact definition. But that does not make "game" meaningless, or all serious questions about games pointless. Nor does it mean that a philosopher of language is to be taken seriously if he offers a stipulative definition of any term that has no relation to the accepted meaning of that term.

VI. 1. Philosophy and Theology.

There appear to be three basic approaches towards this relationship of philosophy and theology which may be briefly considered.

The first position represents a hostile attitude of theology¹ to any philosophical tradition developed outside the concept of the Christian revelations. Athens and Jerusalem are thought to have nothing in common. Philosophy is of no concern to the Christian believer.

The second attitude takes the position that philosophy is an autonomous discipline completely independent of theology. The activity in philosophy depends solely on reason and is primarily concerned with nature. Theology is speculation about the "things" beyond nature, sometimes designated "the spiritual." This view presupposes that faith shall or can only arise from grace and acts of will, but never from the use of human reason. There is no hostility here, and it is possible for one discipline to assist the other.

The third approach seeks to unite or at least correlate faith and reason. Quite early in the Christian era, this approach was asserted in a very impressive way by Augustine. Augustine was "stirred with an earnest love of wisdom" after reading Hortensius, an "Exhortation to Philosophy" which Cicero had written in the style of

¹Tertullian's outburst is notorious: "What is there in common between Athens and Jerusalem, between the Academe and the Church?... For us, we have no need for curiosity, after Jesus Christ, nor for investigation, after the Gospel!." De Praescriptione Haereticorum vii, quoted in P. de Labelle, History and Literature of Christianity from Tertullian to Boethius trans. H. Wilson, (London: 1924), pp. 18-19. Pascal's conversion, which was centered in the "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob not of the philosophers and the wise" brought "forgetfulness of the world and all save God." (B. Pascal "Memorial," quoted by G. Van der Leeuw, Religion in Essence and Manifestation (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1963), Vol. II p. 532.) And Karl Barth asserts that what was for the Greek philosophers and for the Greek-inspired Christians the noblest of human aspirations, is the root of all evil. K. Barth, God Here and Now trans. Paul Van Buren, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 4-7.)

Aristotle.² He attempted to undo the harm Tertullian had done.

Copleston writes:

Neo-Platonism was the last breath, the last flower of ancient pagan philosophy; but in the thought of St. Augustine, it became the first stage in Christian philosophy.³

Since faith precedes understanding, we must use faith in our attempt to understand, for "we believe in order to know, for if we wanted to know first and then to believe, we should not be able either to know or to believe."⁴

Tillich supports this third approach and his Systematic Theology may be regarded as an intellectual endeavour to combine the resources both of theology, as he interprets "theology," and of philosophy in the philosopher's pursuit of wisdom. This, he believes, necessitates systematically connecting his theological enterprise of explaining the man-God relationship with his philosophical undertaking of the clarifying of the man-being relationship. When philosophically "ultimate" issues are raised, theology might then be able to make its own peculiar contribution. Tillich insists that what he calls the ontological question "What is Being-itself?" has a place in both philosophy and theology;⁵ and he considers it appropriate to bring to the attention of theologians anything philosophers write on this question. Indeed, Tillich assigns to the philosopher "the ontological analysis

²Augustine, Confessions, III, iv, 7; VIII, vii, 17.

³F. Copleston, History of Philosophy, Vol. I (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1946), p. 506.

⁴Augustine, Tractate, XXVII, Chapter vi, 9.

⁵S.T., I., pp. 18-26.

of the structure of being,"⁶ and asserts that "if the theologian needs this analysis, either he must take it from a philosopher or he himself must become a philosopher."⁷ He considers that "it is almost always a shortcoming and sometimes the shame of modern theology that its concepts remain unclarified and ambiguous."⁸ Since Tillich has no use for the separation of theology and philosophy, he believes that it is only by the correlation of these two disciplines that the contents of the Christian message may be explained.

The method of correlation explains the contents of the Christian faith through existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence.⁹

In this quotation, it might appear that only what Existentialists have called existential questions would be appropriate to philosophy. But Tillich conceives of philosophy more broadly than this statement suggests. For he says elsewhere, "Existentialism cannot live by itself."¹⁰ Philosophy, for Tillich, is mainly ontological, dealing with the connotations and denotation of "being," and thence leading, as

⁶ S.T., I., p. 26.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ S.T., I., p. 54.

⁹ S.T., I., p. 60. Tillich has considered the relation between philosophy and theology on many occasions -- for example, "Philosophy and Theology" in P.E., pp. 83-93; "The Problem of Theological Method" Journal of Religion, XXVII (January 1947) 16-26; B.R., p. 85; "The Relation of Metaphysics and Theology" Review of Metaphysics, X (1956), 57-63.

¹⁰ P. Tillich, "Existentialism, Psychotherapy and the Nature of Man" in The Nature of Man in Theological and Psychological Perspective ed. Sinion Doneger, (New York: Harper Bros., 1962), p. 44.

this term "being" does, to the concept of Being-itself.¹¹

VI. 2. What is Being-itself?

Tillich states the question "What is Being-itself?" much more explicitly when he asks:

What is that which is not a special being or a group of beings, not something concrete or abstract, but rather something which is always thought implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, if something is said to be?¹²

He comments on this question by telling us that it is the "question of being as being."¹³ The ontological question "arises in something like a 'metaphysical shock' -- the shock of non-being."¹⁴ Tillich suggests that man "must also ask a question about that which creates the mystery of being; he must consider the mystery of non-being."¹⁵

Tillich does not use the term "Being-itself" to signify being merely as the universal or the common property of all things that are. He uses the term "Being-itself" to describe nothing less than the Divine itself. In fact "Being-itself" is the only non-symbolic descriptive term for God that he permits. God is Being-itself, we are told, in so far as God is not just a being among others but the very ground and source of infinite abundance of being in which all other

¹¹See, for example, L.P.J., p. 23; B.R., pp. 5 and 8; S.T., I., pp. 14 and 22.

¹²S.T., I., p. 163.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵S.T., I., p. 186. "The way in which the early Greek philosophers, above all, Parmenides, wrestled with the question of nonbeing is most impressive." See also this study, Chapter II, footnote 7.

beings participate. What ever else is meant by this saying we are clearly meant to infer (a) that God unlike anything else is not a dependent being but is depended on by everything else; (b) that "God" stands for something that is not among₂ (not on the same level with) all other things, all other things being finite and dependent (and not conceptually proper objects of Ultimate Concern or morally appropriate objects of anything even distantly approximating to ultimate concern in emotional or devotional intensity); (c) that "God" does seem to stand for something both usefully describable as "beyond existence and essence" and usefully talked about as something among₁ the things that can be said to be real, to be worth philosophizing about etc.; (d) that "God" does stand for an "individual," albeit unique in so many ways, since God is the ground of all else and not a class of finite existents and essences.

The question, "What is Being-itself?" seems to me to present a kind of muddle best characterized by the words "category confusion," and so a type of question not properly answerable at all. Many questions of the type, "What is X?" appear to be highly ambiguous, and may readily produce "mental cramp." The demand for an answer to a question like "What is X?" tends to suggest that X should properly be some particular (finite) distinguishable thing, to be distinguishable by a finite list of essential properties. As Tillich has so often stated, neither being nor Being-itself can be a particular being among others; so it would appear that neither "Being" nor "Being-itself" could be properly definable in the way that such a question seems to require.

However, the question "What is X?" is sometimes used as a very

loose equivalent for: "What is the meaning of the term 'X'?" or "How would you identify the referent of the concept X?" or "What is the function of X?" or "How is the term 'X' used in the language?" or the like. In such cases, it may be possible to satisfy the questioner, even though no corresponding particular with a definable essence that distinguishes it from others exists.

VI. 3. Possible Relationships between "Being-itself" and "God."

In his attempt to comprehend and articulate the nature of what is ultimate or unconditioned, the philosopher (from the time of Parmenides to the present) has often turned toward Being (or Being-itself or Being-in-itself etc.,) and tried to explore what is meant by the term "being."¹⁶ By contrast, an equally ancient approach has attempted to understand the nature of the ultimate in terms of the concept "God." And so the concepts of "Being-itself" and "God" often appear as alternative notions in many quests for the Ultimate or Unconditioned or Absolute. The question "Which is the really genuine Ultimate?" arises for those who philosophize in such a way.

Two kinds of relation, one of subordination and one of equality, might be considered.

(1a) Someone might take the following position: The relation of subordination is required for those who seek clarification. In clarification the less primitive or basic is subordinated to

¹⁶Heidegger, in Being and Time, op. cit., pp. 2-4, began by asking for a clarification of what is meant by the word "Being." He concluded that in our thinking, from Plato to today, it has meant three fundamental things; "the most universal concept," (Aristotle, Metaphysics B, 4, 1001 a 21) the "undefinable," and the "self-evident."

the more basic. This presupposes that the referent of one of the terms "Being-itself" and "God" is ultimate, and that the referent of the other would be subordinated to the genuinely ultimate; in this case the more ultimate Referent is the most ultimate because most fully Divine.

- (1b) Someone else might say that it is more a matter of subordinate Sense than Reference. Thus "Y" is subordinate to "X" if "X" is the more sacred term for the most sacred referent. (Compare, for example, Hebrew terms for the Divinity: "Jahweh" is more sacred than "Elohim").
- (1c) Someone else might say: "Y" is subordinate to "X" because by understanding that "X" means one gains a profounder grasp of what is more important for wisdom than by understanding what "Y" means - whether or not "X" and "Y" share the same Referent.
- (2) Interest in the second kind of relation, equality, could lead one to say either that the Referents of "Being-itself" and "God" were identical, or that they were to be considered as co-equal in holiness, importance, value and so on. Or interest in equality could lead one to say things analogous to the claims under (1b) and (1c).

Suppose a philosopher-theologian is interested in (1a), questions about the subordinate Referent. Suppose also that he assumes both that "God" and "Being-itself" do not have (exactly?) the same referent and, like Tillich, that there can be but one ultimate.¹⁷ He argues accordingly. Then either God is subordinate to Being or Being

¹⁷ B.R., p. 58.

is subordinate to God. If God is subordinate to Being, it would seem that God would lose his ultimacy. In this case God would be a being, and then his place in the whole of being would have to be carefully considered. In such a case, God would be accorded a special existential status along with qualities which would regard him as perfect, supreme, almighty etc., but he would have to be accepted as the supreme being among the concrete things which are to be found in the cosmos. As the ultimate concrete being, he would be regarded as infinite and his relative ultimate position would set him apart as sacred, and holy, and so an object of worship. Thus God would be a being, supreme and infinitely perfect, standing in perfect contrast to all finite things. For such a philosopher, I would argue, the reference of "Being" seems more important than the reference of "God" and the sense of "Being" seems more illuminating than the sense of "God." Above all, the senses of the two terms are distinct, and so the question of whether "God" has any reference at all could arise. As Being is the fundamental notion for such a thinker, God would be for him a possible being who may or may not really exist; arguments for His existence would be relevant and perhaps even necessary. The resulting conception of God, which resembles closely what Tillich calls the "God of theism" is rejected by Tillich.

A rival thinker might argue for the following stand: The Sense and Reference of "Being" are to be completely subordinated to the Sense and Reference of "God." So one cannot even consider God's place in being, nor would it be appropriate to ask if he exists. We cannot consider his relation to ontological categories, since he transcends not only Being-itself but the whole ontological framework.

Tillich does not favour this non-immanent way of trying to do theology.

Tillich has opted for the position that "God" and "Being itself" have the same Reference. Hence no question about which Referent is subordinate arises. He also seems fairly clearly to hold that their Senses are distinct but will be seen to be closely related, indeed correlated by those who grasp their Senses with keen intelligence and understanding. For Tillich the answer to questions related to (1b) is that "God" has a more sacred Sense than "Being-itself." The answer to questions related to (1c) is that both Senses are, for purposes of gaining wisdom, equally important to understand. Indeed, one cannot fully understand how to use the one term without understanding how to use the other. This would not mean, however, that each ultimate or fundamental notion, "God" and "Being-itself," would be regarded as genuinely ultimate in its own sphere of discourse. Theology and Ontology, Tillich would insist, should not be radically distinguished, and "God" and "Being-itself" are not to be regarded as mutually exclusive in Sense.

In view of this identity of Reference, God is Being-itself. Hence we may conclude that there is nothing other than himself. In the traditional language of theology (and philosophy) we would say that God is "self-caused."¹⁸ God is not to be thought of as something

¹⁸ Causa sui conveys both a negative and positive meaning. Negatively, it signifies that which is from itself (a se), that which does not owe its being to something else; i.e., absolute independence of being (God as uncaused). Positively, causa sui means that whose very nature or essence involves existence; i.e., God is the very ground of his own being. Since existence necessarily follows from

which may or may not be, and the question of his place in the whole of being fails to arise. As identical with Being-itself, he is equated to the most fundamental notion of the philosophical enterprise.¹⁹

VI. 4. Beings and Being.

In the case of every entity which we call a being, it would seem that it is essential to distinguish between a being and the being that it has. For "this being of which I will speak is an existent particular" and "the particular of which I shall speak has this sort of nature" assign being qua existence and being qua essence, it would seem, in an intelligible synthetic manner. Whether this distinction is or is not of importance in the case of a particular person, it becomes crucial if we attempt to apply this distinction to God. If God were a being (as suggested in traditional theism), then if he as a being were distinguished from the Being he possesses, it would seem that the notion of Being would become a more basic notion than that of God, since he would have to presuppose the Being that he has. Tillich, of course, would reject any suggestion which does not grant to God and to "God" an ultimate status. As Tillich would argue, God is not a being, and hence this question of some sort of subordination of the notion of God to the notion of Being would not arise.

It is clearer still that Being and God are identical, so that no question of subordination will arise. But it may be asked, with

the very essence of that which is the cause of itself, causa sui is defined as that whose nature cannot be conceived as not existing. Spinoza ETHICS I, Prop. XVI, Corollary 2.

¹⁹S.T., I., p. 235.

what is God identical and Being identical? Is their identification with, say, the totality of beings plausible or even possible? This totality is not a universal, at least in the generally accepted sense, and it seems that we would regard the totality as infinite. The totality could be distinguished from any given individual being which is a member ("a proper subset") of the totality, and so would appear to "reveal" a kind of transcendence. Totality of being contains within itself all possible beings; that is, it is immanent in them. Of course, were we to accept the identity of God and the totality of all possible and actual beings, or rather, if Tillich accepted this, he could be charged with a form of religious pantheism, an accusation which he denies.²⁰

Before we consider any further this suggestion of the equation of God with that which appears to be infinite, transcendent, and immanent in all beings, (namely the totality of beings), we must look at what Tillich has to say about the totality of beings. He carefully distinguishes between two concepts, "the whole of being" and "being taken as a whole."²¹ The primary concern of the philosopher is not the totality of beings but the structure which transforms this

²⁰S.T., I., pp. 230-234; S.T., II., p. 12; C.B., pp. 86ff and pp. 156ff. We shall return to the question of pantheism later; See Chapter VII, Section 6. A possible alternative interpretation would be "platonistic," that God is the set of all particulars and of all proper sub-sets of particulars. But this alternate is not considered by Tillich. I use "platonistic" in a way familiar to students of Russell and Carnap.

²¹S.T., I., p. 23.

totality into a whole.²²

If, however, we were to insist on identifying God with the totality of beings, the categories of individualization and participation (sometimes termed individuality and universality) would become outstandingly important. While Tillich might want to play down the former concept (individuality) he would certainly accentuate the latter. In fact, Tillich might perhaps want to say of persons in spite of Quine,²³ "to be is to participate" as a "self" in an infinite number of beings.²⁴ In such a case, Tillich would argue, the Reference of "being" is not a totality of "atomic" beings. Being is to be understood by reference to the structural roles of individualization and participation. These roles serve to alter the chaotic nightmare of an atomistic totality into Being-taken-as-a-whole, or Being-itself. So Being is not the totality of beings, but reality-as-a-whole, and "reality as a whole" means the "unified and unifying structure of the

²²Being-itself, or being as being, on the one hand, and "being's structure in its wholeness," on the other hand, may be taken as synonymous for the time being. But what Tillich means by "Being-itself" vis-a-vis "being's structure" is probably the most ambivalent - though not inconsistent - point in his whole ontology.

²³W.V.O. Quine, "On What There Is" From a Logical Point of View, op. cit., p. 15.

²⁴"Being a self," Tillich says, "means being separated in some way from everything else, having everything else opposite one's self, being able to look at it and to act upon it" (S.T. I., p. 170). We may conclude that the formal, emergently open and empty distance from across which the human self is able to look at and act upon its world is "the empty space of mere validity" (S.T., III., p. 84). See also S.T., I., p. 94.

universe."²⁵

VI. 5. The Structure of Being.

The question which now arises may be an important one: What is the relation between "God" and "Being" understood perhaps loosely but I think very helpfully, in terms of the phrase The Structure of Being? Tillich informs us that "philosophy deals with the structure of being in itself; theology deals with the meaning of being for us."²⁶ We see in this quotation one of the points of divergence in the attitudes of philosopher and theologian. The philosopher (as he is frequently conceived) attempts to preserve "a detached objectivity towards being and its structures," excluding, as far as possible, personal, social and historical conditions. The knowledge that is gained through the labours of the scientist forms "the basis of his description of the categories, structural laws, and the concepts which

²⁵ J.H. Randall (T.P.T., p. 139) says that Tillich "passes easily from 'being as such' to 'reality as a whole' identifying two very different conceptions. The first is Aristotelian, the second is the object of nineteenth century idealism. The first means those generic traits that can be discriminated in any subject matter; the second means a unified and unifying structure of the universe, 'objective reason,' what Tillich properly calls 'the universal logos.' The second can be, and traditionally has been, identified with God; the first, though it will be exemplified in religion as is everything else, possesses in itself no religious significance, and is not, as such, of 'existential concern.' 'The structure of being' can hardly mean two such different things. The first is the proper object of an Aristotelian ontological inquiry; the second is the goal of Platonic and Neo-Platonic aspiration, the 'Being' that is the Idea of the Good and the One." Tillich (T.P.T., p. 335) writes: "I accept the criticism that 'being as a whole' is an ambiguous phrase, used only as the opposite of 'the whole of being.' It actually means to me no more than 'Being-itself.'"

²⁶ S.T., I., p. 22.

constitute the structure of being."²⁷ And further, the philosopher "tries to penetrate into the structure of being by means of the power of his cognitive functions and its structures."²⁸ Tillich does not think that a good philosopher could think of Being with such a total detachment; Tillich, as we saw in Chapter II, is a teleologist in philosophy and religion.

Beings, as individualized entities, comprise a framework (or structure) of actual and possible beings. It would seem that one of Tillich's objections to traditional theism is that God as even the most supreme and perfect being would have to be given a place within this structure. This would make God part of a larger whole, and this would be incompatible with his ultimacy and with his recognition as the appropriate object of religious concern. We might here indicate another reason why God must be precluded from being part of the structure. The ontological concept represented by the phrase "individualization and participation" is a polar concept. Under the conditions of existence, these two poles are never in perfect balance, that is, they are never in harmony. One of the poles always predominates, and in the case of the person it is the pole of individualization which is the more powerful. This means that in man the pole of participation becomes very much less than perfect.²⁹ Tillich, I contend, would require that God participate perfectly in his creatures, which would mean that God cannot be a particular within the structure of

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ S.T., I., p. 23.

²⁹ B.R., pp. 83-84; S.T., I., p. 176.

being. The structure of being is not, of course, a being among others, but that to which beings are subject. The structures of being, it would seem at first sight, are finite structures of finitude since beings, structured by the structure of being, are limited and finite creatures. But if we say that the structure of being is finite because the contents without exception are finite, we clash head-on with Tillich's notion of the structure of being.

Tillich contends, looking back on his first volume of Systematic Theology, that "the structure of being, although it is rooted in being-as-such, is certainly not identical with it, and should perhaps have been more sharply distinguished from it."³⁰ However, there seems to be a sense in which the "structure of being" is the same as Being-itself (or being-as-such), and there seems to be another sense in which "the structure of being" must be distinguished from Being-itself. It would seem that in the latter sense, God may be affirmed to be the structure of being in a symbolic sense.

Twice on consecutive pages of Systematic Theology, Tillich identifies God with the structure of being:

He is this structure, and it is impossible to speak about him except in terms of this structure. God must be approached cognitively through the structural elements of being-itself. These elements make him a living God, a God who can be man's concrete concern. They enable us to use symbols which we are certain point to the ground of reality.

God as being-itself is the ground of the ontological structure of being without being subject to the structure himself. He is the structure; that is, he has the power

³⁰ T.P.T., p. 335.

of determining the structure of everything that has being.³¹

These two passages in combination serve a single purpose, that of clarifying to some extent what Tillich means by saying that God is the structure of being. It seems to me that Tillich is laying a basis for the validity of our claims to have knowledge of God by affirming God or Being-itself (Tillich has identified the two in the context) to be the inclusive whole of the ontological structures. For on this basis our intuition of the divine mystery in any genuine religious symbol has cognitively ascertainable reference to the Ground of Being, since the ontological structures fashioned into a religious symbol are constituents (recognizable as such) of the very texture of being.

Thus God is the structure of being, first of all, as the whole which includes its constituent elements and categories. This implies that God (or Being-itself) is the unity (the One) which qualifies these constituent elements and categories as one whole. The dialectical character of Tillich's thought forces one to conceive of this unity of these constituent elements and categories, not as a "static" beingness, (which they all happen to share) but as a dynamic unifying of the ontological constituents, even though these elements have considerable divisive tendencies. Tillich sees God as a dynamic living God, not as an unmoved mover. Tillich provides many instances of God as dynamic (symbolically speaking, of course). Perhaps one of the most striking instances occurs when he indicates that the divine life is essentially creative, and contends that, using all three modes

³¹ S.T., I., pp. 238-239.

of time, we are able to speak of "originating creation, sustaining creation and directing creation."³²

In the second of the passages quoted, Tillich relates God to the structure of reality by saying that God is this structure in the sense of determining any structuredness, though God is not himself determined thereby. So we are not able to say, at least in any straightforward literal way, that God is identical with the structure which contains only finite and limited things. Perhaps we could say that the structure implies finitude in the sense that the beings structured by this structure are always limited and finite. Or we may say that God is the "whence" of structure, conditioning all things, yet remaining unconditioned by their structured and intelligible form. In these senses, God is the structure of beings: he includes the structures of being as the cohering whole which possesses them, as the unity (the oneness) which unites them, and the source which determines them.

Of the concepts mentioned, coherence and oneness (wholeness and inclusiveness) are, in Tillich's epistemology, direct and abstractedly cognizable. But the actual dynamic implications of the words "unifying," "conditioning," and "determining" seem to suggest the ranging of God over against the reality in which he is operating, and we know that the dualism of God and world is not accepted in Tillich's theology, (at least not in any literal sense). Hence it would seem that the dynamic qualities mentioned may only be attributed to God in

³²S.T., I., p. 253. "God has created the world, he is creative in the present moment, and he will creatively fulfil his telos." Subsections 4, 5, and 6 of Part II Section 2 of Tillich's Systematic Theology employ the headings; God as Living, God as Creating, and God as Related, illustrating clearly God's dynamic and determining actions. S.T., I., pp. 236-286.

a symbolic sense, whereas the ontological structure in its oneness, inclusiveness and coherence could be directly and literally affirmed.

It might be suggested that the statement "God is the structure of being" be regarded as an assertion which in some ways is worth treating like a literal assertion of Tillich's about the Divine Nature. On the other hand, being a statement about God, it is also to be regarded as a symbolic statement. Perhaps we could say that it is an expression which belongs to the symbolic-unsymbolic boundary.³³

In all this, we see Tillich's normative doctrine of God. The normative doctrine of God may be summed up as (a) the identification of God with the inclusive wholeness of the structure of being, and then (b) the description of God using symbolic material from three of the four levels comprising the ontological structure. The symbols are used and adapted from the genuine symbolic "substance" in order that they may "shine through" the ontological structure, retaining their concreteness while illustrating their authenticity by adequately expressing some living experiences of the holy.³⁴

VI. 6. The Logos.

The identity of God with the structure of being, without implying the finitude of either God or Being-itself, is made plausible by the distinction between ontic concepts and ontological categories. Ontology is possible only because there are concepts which are less universal than Being, but more universal than any ontic concept which

³³See section 10 of this chapter.

³⁴See S.T., II., p. 138 and S.T., I., p. 240.

designates a specific realm of beings. These ontological concepts, as contrasted with ontic concepts of a limited range of designation, comprise the structure of being and thus the structure of everything there is. As universal in scope and application it might seem that they are indeed identical with esse ipsum.³⁵

The religious equivalent of the view that Being is to be identified with the structure of being, is to be found in the traditional doctrine that God is to be equated with the logos. The need for a point of identity is appreciated if one considers the possibility of proceeding beyond the subject-object dichotomy. Or as Tillich says: "the point of procedure in every analysis of experience and every concept of a system of reality must be the point where subject and object are at one and the same place."³⁶ Thus analysis of experience turns to the logos, the element of form, of meaning and of structure.³⁷

In the knowing subject, the self, the logos is called subjective reason and makes the self a centered structure. In the known object, or world, it is called objective reason and makes the world a structured whole. There is nothing beyond the logos structure of

³⁵ S.T., I., p. 164.

³⁶ I.H., p. 60.

³⁷ In Tillich's opinion, human religious awareness, which he refers to as "the religious mind - theologically speaking, man in the correlation of revelation," with greater or less clarity intuitively with the divine, the three principles of ground (or abyss), logos (or form), and Spirit. "The logos opens the divine ground, its infinity and its darkness, and makes its fulness distinguishable, definite, finite. The logos has been called the mirror of the divine depth, the principle of God's objectification. In the logos God speaks his "word," both in himself and beyond himself... the Spirit... gives actuality to that which is potential in the divine ground and 'outspoken' in the divine logos" (S.T., I., pp. 243, 251; Cf. pp. 156ff and 282.)

being.³⁸ Philosophers seem to hold or have held an identity, or at least an analogy, to exist between the logos of the mind and the logos of the world.³⁹ The problem of why there should be this correspondence can be solved if the logos is regarded primarily as the structure of the divine life and the principle of its self-manifestation. For then it is the medium of creation, mediating "between the silent abyss of being and the fullness of the concrete individualized, self-related beings."⁴⁰ The identity of the structures of mind and of reality will follow from the fact that both have been mediated through the same divine logos.

In this way, "reason in both its objective and subjective structures points to something which appears in these structures but which transcends them in power and meaning."⁴¹ Logos becomes the point of identity between God and the ontological structure. God is within being as the power of being, as an analytic dimension in the structure of reality.⁴² So he is the

"substance" which appears in the rational structure, or "being-itself" which is manifest in the logos of being, or the "ground" which is creative in every rational creation, or the "abyss" which cannot be exhausted by any creation or by any totality of them, or the "infinite potentiality of being and meaning" which pours into the rational structures of mind and reality, actualizing and transforming them.⁴³

³⁸ S.T., I., pp. 156, 171-172, 279.

³⁹ S.T., I., pp. 23, 75-76, See also L.P.J., pp. 21-22.

⁴⁰ S.T., I., p. 158.

⁴¹ S.T., I., p. 79.

⁴² S.T., I., p. 207.

⁴³ S.T., I., p. 79.

When the logos is considered to be really distinct from the world, it is usually regarded as a normative structure which receives its concrete expression in some notion of God as justice. God stands over against the world as a judge and is identified by the demands which he makes on the beings which comprise the cosmos. By contrast, if the logos is regarded as the abstractable aspect of the cosmos as a whole, God then seems to be identified with what Spinoza would call "the soul and essence of the world."⁴⁴ God is not to be equated with the totality of beings but with the intelligible structure of the cosmos taken as a whole. This position represents a sophisticated form of pantheism and is one of the forms in which the view that God is to be identified with structure receives a concrete religious expression.

The emergence of the many from the depths of the one is not a smooth, flowing or emanationist matter.⁴⁵ Prominent in Tillich's ontology are themes - (notably the omni-presence of bi-polar relations, the dialectic of separtion and reunion, and the metaphor of "power" which occupies a prime position among Tillich's metaphors) - which make it clear that Tillich's ontology belongs to that variant of the type of world view in which manifoldness of movement, life, and differentiation is generated out of a tension or contrariety which roots

⁴⁴Spinoza, Ethics Part I., prop. 25. Karl Jaspers writes: The logos is the essence of the world and the soul." (Karl Jaspers, The Great Philosophers (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1966), Heraclitus, p. 18.

⁴⁵Cf. Spinoza, Ethics Part I, Prop. 17: "From the supreme power of God, or from his infinite nature... all things have necessarily flowed, and continually follow by the same necessity, in the same way as it follows from the nature of a triangle, from eternity to eternity, that its three angles are equal to two right angles." Spinoza Selections ed. John Wild, (New York: Scribners' Sons, 1930), p. 115 (my italics).

back into the divine ground, although in the depths of that ground the tension is eternally overcome. Expounding Heraclitus' doctrine in order to make his point, Tillich says: "everything is an embracing but transitory unity of two opposite processes. Things are hypostasized tensions."⁴⁶

The relation of the structure of being to God or Being-itself, and especially the equation of God to that structure presents quite a number of problems. Some of these I have attempted to bring forward but no clear-cut solutions have been found. In this next section I wish to deal with the structure and its component parts to ascertain if any further light may be thrown on our problems.

VI. 7. The Ontological Structure.

The word "structure" seems to have many connotations. But as we so often find with words having a family of meanings, most of the connotations have something in common. The word "structure" may mean any of the following: (a) the manner of building or constructing; the way in which an edifice, machine etc., is made or put together (b) that which is built or constructed; a building of any kind, but especially one of considerable size; (c) a fabric or framework of material parts; (d) the arrangement or interrelation of all the parts in a whole; the manner of organization or construction; an organized body or combination of mutually connected and dependent parts or

⁴⁶S.T., I., pp. 198-199. L.P.J., p. 55. As Heraclitus says: "all things come to pass in accordance with the logos." Always implicit in the concept of "logos" is the unity of opposites. "Men do not understand how what is at variance agrees with itself. It is an attunement of opposite tensions like that of the bow and the lyre." K. Jaspers, op. cit., p. 17.

elements. This last explication of the word "structure" is probably the most common, and in many cases, this is what Tillich means when he refers to certain structures. Thus, we often speak of the structure of an atom or molecule, or the complex structure of plants and animals, and we also talk about the structure of society. When we talk of the structure of buildings or of mathematics or of society, we are usually referring to the "parts in the whole" and the relation of those parts in the whole. Tillich refers to the basic ontological structure and by this he means the relation of the parts (self and world) to the whole. But he also uses the word "structure" in a wider sense, as when he speaks of the structure of finitude as "good in itself, but under the conditions of estrangement, it becomes a structure of destruction."⁴⁷ This use of "structure" refers to the fact that the self neither can escape from having to resist its finitude, nor can succeed in its resistance; it can neither gain itself nor lose itself. Tillich also speaks of "structures of healing." The existential counterpart to the essential balance between being and non-being is the balance between destruction and healing; "structures of destruction are counterbalanced by structures of healing and reunion of the estranged."⁴⁸

However, the structures of reason, of myth and of the subject-object dichotomy seem to fall into the pattern of the relation of parts to the whole. But deeper meanings are sometimes attached to this word "structure." Possibly the most interesting one occurs when Tillich considers the relation of the concept of structure to what he terms

⁴⁷ S.T., II., p. 71.

⁴⁸ S.T., II., p. 75.

"depth."

Myth and ritual cannot be reduced to any of the other functions of reason.⁴⁹ They are not primitive forms of science or morality, nor are they aesthetic counterparts of cognitive expressions. On the contrary, Tillich considers that they embody the dimensions of "depth" which "precedes" the structure. They are "expressions of the depth of reason in symbolic form" and "lie in a dimension where no interference with the proper function of reason is possible."⁵⁰ Since the basic ontological structure is the self-world or subject-object polarity, "depth" is used to refer to what is beyond that polarity. But every expression, even in myth, has to be told by someone to someone, so the difference between expressions of "depth" and "structure" is in their use. In the former case, "the structure" is used to point to something beyond itself, while the latter expression indicates that the structure itself is directly meant. Myth and ritual may be regarded as structures of the depth of structure. The distinction between the holy and the secular is illustrative of the same point. "Everything has the dimension of depth, and at the moment in which the third dimension is actualized, holiness appears."⁵¹

In Tillich's terminology, depth is apprehended only in a correlation of "ecstasy" and "miracle," and these two forms refer to its emergence both subjectively and objectively. "Ecstasy is the miracle

⁴⁹ S.T., I., pp. 80f.

⁵⁰ S.T., I., p. 81.

⁵¹ S.T., I., p. 218.

of the mind, and that miracle is the ecstasy of reality."⁵² For this reason every interpretation of myth and ritual must take in both sides of the structure relation: they represent the emergence of depth not only in the world of the people who use them but in the people themselves as they use them. God is interpreted through a sign-event as the depth of the subjective as well as the objective sides of the structure. It must always be remembered that by "structure" Tillich does not only mean an object of thought, but an act of thought also. In other words, the basic structure is not only the dynamic and static poles of that structure but also the acts of relating and being related.⁵³

Tillich posits four levels of ontological concepts, all of which are necessary for the consideration of the meaning of God.

- I. The basic ontological structure.
"self" and "world."
- II. The ontological elements (which constitute that basic structure).
"Individuality" and "Universality" (Individualization and participation).
"Dynamics" and "form."
"Freedom" and "destiny."
- III. Characteristics of being, (which are the conditions of existence).
Essence-existence dichotomy.
Infinity and finitude.

Finitude is related to (a) freedom and destiny
(b) being and non-being
(c) essence and existence

⁵²S.T., I., pp. 113 and 117. See also John King-Farlow, "Miracles" op. cit.

⁵³See L.S. Ford, "Tillich and Thomas" Journal of Religion, XLVI, (1966) 229-245, where it is shown how this conflation of act and object also characterized Tillich's use of "being" (as ens and as esse).

IV. The categories of finite being and knowing.

Time, space, causality, substance etc. (There are an indefinite number of categories, but only these four are theologically significant.⁵⁴

The importance of the ontological structure in Tillich's philosophical-theological interpretation is shown when the concepts which are contained in the structure also express the "depth" of being. This may be accomplished by letting the symbol for the depth of being ("God") be structured by the same concepts. Concepts applicable to God must be applied in such a way that he includes and transcends them at the same time. This, of course, is the purpose of a symbol - one must distinguish between the "proper" (literal) use or sense of the concept (or of its associated term) and its symbolic sense. "It is equally necessary to balance one side of the ontological polarity against the other, without reducing the symbolic power of either of them."⁵⁵

Ontological concepts of the first level ("self" and "world") are adequate to the extent that they are capable of indicating what makes the structure of subject-object possible. In other words, ontological concepts are possible because man in his experience knows that there is a world to which he belongs and yet from which he can at least by intellectual abstraction or suicide, separate himself. So as a self (or person with a discriminating, evaluating, and synthesizing consciousness), man has a world, a structured whole for a conceptual scheme, and his relation to it is the ontological structure

⁵⁴"Finitude is actual not only in the categories but also in the ontological elements." (S.T., I., p. 198).

⁵⁵S.T., I., p. 244.

which implies all other structures.⁵⁶ The structure of the world, for Tillich, is objective reason. Self is seen as a structure of centeredness. Subjective reason, a polar concept, becomes the relation of self to world, or subject to object. However, rational philosophical discussion can only operate within the framework of subject and object, or self and world. Hence to answer any question about what precedes this duality Tillich suggests that the concept of revelation is required.

The polarity of subject and object may be expressed in ontological terms as the "self" and the "world." Self-world is that basic ontological structure in which is contained the being of all finite beings. Self-world presupposes a questioner (the self) and something about which the questioner asks (the world).⁵⁷

The word "self" in this polarity of self-world seems to have a double meaning, and this double use of the word is not always clear in Tillich's writings. On the one hand, "self" means what Tillich calls "self-relatedness," the immediately experience "I" in such expressions as "I am" and "I think." It is of this meaning that he says, "The question is not whether selves exist. The question is whether we are aware of self-relatedness. And this awareness can only be denied in a statement in which self-relatedness is explicitly affirmed."⁵⁸ This means that the act of making the denial refutes the content of the denial. On the other hand, "self" may be used to refer

⁵⁶ S.T., I., pp. 166ff.

⁵⁷ S.T., I., pp. 164 and 171f.

⁵⁸ S.T., I., p. 169.

to a kind of being, namely a self-reflective being, or any man. Tillich means by this variety of use of "self" something like "a structure of centeredness." It is self in this latter sense in which all ontological elements are actualized. Tillich does not make any systematic use of this distinction in meaning, but it is implied in two somewhat different ways of speaking of the being of God. Of the two meanings of "self," it would seem that the first sense is the more important one from the viewpoint of contemplation and response.

The second level of ontological concepts is that of the elements which constitute the basic ontological structure and are found in every being.⁵⁹ Like the ontological structure itself, the elements, too, are polar, that is, they are meaningful only insofar as the poles are related. There are three elements:

- A. Individuality - universality
- B. Dynamics - form
- C. Freedom - destiny.

(A) Individualization is implied in the self which cannot be divided. Though every being is an individual, man is the totally centered self. That is, he is a person. The individual self of every being participates in its environment, but man, the microcosm, participates in the whole universe by means of the rational structure of mind. When "individualization reaches the perfect form which we call a person," says Tillich, "participation reaches the perfect form which we call

⁵⁹ S.T., I., p. 165.

"communion" - participation in another personal self."⁶⁰

(B) Being an individual means having a form.⁶¹ But having a form

must be associated with something which Tillich calls "dynamics."

Dynamics cannot be conceptualized but only symbolized, for it has no form, and yet it is not nothing. "It is the me on, the potentiality

of being, which is non-being in contrast to things which have a form, and the power of being in contrast to pure non-being."⁶² It appears

in metaphysical thought, for example, in metaphysical beliefs about

the Urgrund (Boehme), the Will (Schopenhauer), the Will to Power

(Nietzsche), and the Unconscious (Freud). Dynamics in human experi-

ence appear as vitality, the power of life and growth.⁶³ Form appears

as intentionality, the grasping and shaping of reality through univer-

sals. "Intention" in this context, does not mean the will to act for

some purpose; it means "living in tension" with something objectively

valid. In short, self-transcendence (dynamics) is always in correct

polar balance with self-conservation (form) where "self-conservation"

means the preservation of his humanity.

(C) In discussing freedom and destiny, Tillich will not use the word

"necessity" for he rejects a polarity of mechanistic determinacy and

⁶⁰ S.T., I., p. 176.

⁶¹ S.T., I., p. 178. "The form which makes a thing what it is, is its content, its essentia, its definite power of being."

⁶² S.T., I., p. 179.

⁶³ L.P.J., p. 54. "Everything wants to grow. It was to increase its power of being in forms which include and conquer more non-being. Metaphorically speaking, one could say that the molecule wants to become a crystal, the crystal a cell, the cell a center of cells, the plant animal, the animal man, the man god, the weak strong, the isolated participating, the imperfect perfect, and so on!"

indeterminate contingency, which considers freedom as a quality of a thing called the "will." Tillich asserts that the freedom of a thing is contradictory. Only man, the total self, the personal centre, is free.⁶⁴ Freedom is experienced as deliberation, decision, and responsibility, and man experiences his freedom within that larger structure to which he belongs. Destiny is the world to which man as body, self, temperament, his conscious and unconscious part, his social community, his material surroundings, and particularly his free decisions, belong.

Destiny is not a strange power which determines what shall happen to me. It is myself as given, formed by nature, history and myself. My destiny is the basis of my freedom, my freedom participates in shaping my destiny.⁶⁵

The three ontological elements have been considered "horizontally" with each polar element in balance with its opposite. If, however, we split them vertically, one side of the polarities - individuality, dynamics and freedom - would express the self-creating (subjective) power of being. The opposite side - universality, form and destiny - expresses the belongingness of being, that is, its participation in the universe of being. The ontological structure, the self-world is evident in the ontological elements.

Symbolic material is provided by the ontological elements but the structure provides no symbolic material at all.⁶⁶ Where symbolic material is provided, we must carefully distinguish between the literal sense and the symbolic sense. In the case of the ontological

⁶⁴ S.T., I., p. 183.

⁶⁵ S.T., I., p. 185.

⁶⁶ S.T., I., p. 244.

elements, individuality and universality (individualization and participation) may both be ascribed to God. God may be designated the "absolute individual" in a meaningful (symbolic) sense only if he is at the same time the "absolute participant"; Tillich says that "the one term cannot be applied without the other."⁶⁷ Similarly in the case of dynamics and form and freedom and destiny: to say, for example, that God is free (or freedom) means that there is no power outside of the power of Being-itself to which God could be subject. Tillich puts it this way: "That which is man's ultimate concern is in no way dependent on man or on any finite being or on any finite concern."⁶⁸

If we glance at the ontological categories, we note that the symbol "eternal" is related to the category of time, the symbol "omnipresence" to the category of space, while the symbolic expression "the creative and abysmal ground of being" has reference to both causality and substance.⁶⁹

It may seem peculiar that the expressions for the ontological structure, "self" and "world" provides no symbolic material at all. Tillich explains that self and world are "kinds of being" rather than "qualities of being." It is only qualities of being that are "valid in their proper sense when applied to all beings and valid in their symbolic sense when applied to Being-itself." God cannot be called a "self" because, that concept implies separation from and contrast to

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ S.T., I., p. 248.

⁶⁹ S.T., I., p. 238.

anything which is not a self. And God could hardly be called a world!

Since the polarity of self-world can be either the polarity of the being-man, or that of self-relatedness and relatedness to the object, world, we must discuss the being of God from the two ways indicated by the double meaning of "self."

Considering first the case of man as a being over against the other side of the polarity, world, we may ask ourselves what "position" God holds in the duality of self-world. It is obvious, it seems, that God cannot be derived from the self or from the world, or from both of these units together, as a conditioned God is no God.⁷⁰ The polarity of self-world cannot be divided; it must be accepted. It is the ultimate datum, for this is all there is, and we are unable to derive anything from either one pole or the other. But God_t is not a third kind of entity either, since to make God_t a third kind of being outside the self-world polarity would mean that Tillich accepts supernaturalism, and this he does not do. God_t is the "ground" or "abyss" of two kinds of being which are both irreducible. The idealistic conception that God may be identified with the totality is also rejected by Tillich. God_t is not a unity of self and world in a larger whole, for this notion would overlook the infinite gap between God and finite being, a gap which can be bridged from God's side only. Tillich's concept of ground thus opposes both the idealistic and the supernaturalistic conceptions of God.⁷¹

⁷⁰ S.T., I., p. 248.

⁷¹ J.L. Adams, op. cit., pp. 219 and 223. God_t refers to Tillich's usage of the word "God."

It is when the two poles of self and world become transparent to that which is beyond their polarity, that the depth is reached. If this "appears" as a destructive power, it is termed the "abyss." If it appears as a maintaining, supporting and sustaining power, it is termed the "ground." So God as ground and abyss of man and his world can only be known through their polarity, for he is not some supernatural third reality nor is he a totality or synthesis of self-world. As God is the ground of self and world, we now see why anything whatsoever may be transparent to the ground. In other words, anything has the potentiality of becoming a symbol and opening up a deeper reality to us. However, it must be realized that should an object (or subject for that matter) become a symbol, the object must be capable of undergoing a considerable internal metamorphosis. If an object is not capable of itself becoming a polar concept, and if it is unable to negate itself while affirming the ground to which it directs man in depth, then theoretically it could not act as a symbol. But as the self-world is polar, it seems that all the beings in it are potentially capable of the symbolic act. Hence any polarity, good and bad, positive and negative, has God_t as its depth. God_t cannot be equated with either pole, but it is the oscillatory action of the two poles which expresses the depth, and this kind of action is the action of the being of God_t . In other words, God_t appears through his action of being. The potential polarities of the totality which is man-world or self-world, are awaiting the action of God_t , hence God_t cannot be subject to the ontological structure, nor can the structure be subject

to God_t. Tillich says "he is the structure."⁷² This means that what the ontological structure contains, finite being, both self and world, becomes symbolic when interpreting the being of God_t.

Tillich's approach to the object (God_t or being-itself) of ultimate concern may be viewed from a very post-Leibnizian and Germanic philosophical standpoint. In this case it appears to be a combination of mysticism and neo-Kantianism. Quite fundamental to Tillich's understanding of God_t is his assertion that the unconditioned being-itself lies "beyond the subject-object structure." It is, of course, in Kant and in post-Kantian philosophies that the subject-object relation became most famously prominent in German philosophy since Leibniz.⁷³ The activity of the knowing mind (the subject) and the reception of the contents which are presented to the mind by the senses (the objects) constitute perception and thought. It is important to note that every finite thing appears to us in a subject-object relation. Thus Tillich apparently can infer that God_t as the unconditional cannot appear within the subject-object relationship as either subject or object in any literal sense.⁷⁴

VI. 8. Synonyms.

Tillich's entire analysis of being leads up to the question of God, since philosophy is apparently unable to solve its own problems.

⁷² S.T., I., pp. 238f.

⁷³ Cf. I. Kant. Critique of Pure Reason, A, 103-130.

⁷⁴ As only finite beings can appear literally within the subject-object structure, God_t (as neither a finite being nor a being) cannot belong inside this structure. He may be ecstatically encountered, since "ecstasy" refers to "reality beyond the split between subject and object" (S.T., III., p. 70).

While philosophy deals theoretically with the structure of being, religion deals existentially with the meaning of being for us. So the questions raised for man by his finitude and by the tensions of being a man in the world can only be elucidated by theological methods. Philosophy has taken us to the limits, and neither the physical nor the social sciences has anything further to offer man here, Tillich would insist, because we have now left the realm of technical reason.⁷⁵

The basic theological question, for Tillich, is the question of fruitfully clarifying the idea of God, since the "idea of God is the foundation of every theological thought...."⁷⁶ We might recall here the function of religious symbols: all religious symbols refer the community or group to the supreme symbol "God."

Tillich offers two formal criteria which serve to define theology and its goal the "object of theology." He says:

The object of theology is that which concerns us ultimately. Only those proposition are theological which deal with their object insofar as it is a matter of ultimate concern for us.⁷⁷

What then is the object of ultimate concern called by Tillich? The answer is given quite explicitly by two statements: (1) "God_t is

⁷⁵ Tillich's claims about philosophy seem to me to be enormous, but it must be pointed out that the whole of Part 1 and much of Part 2 in Volume I of Systematic Theology are directly or indirectly a defence of his ideas. Tillich's belief in ultimate inadequacy of philosophy is not a matter of dogmatic or irrational prejudice.

⁷⁶ S.T., II., p. 5.

⁷⁷ S.T., I., p. 12.

that which concerns us ultimately,"⁷⁸ and (2) "God_t is Being-itself."⁷⁹ The problem is to explicate both statements.⁸⁰ The task in hand is to attempt to explicate the second of these statements. We have tried to give an account of ultimate concern in section 4 of the previous chapter.

The statement "God is being-itself" is purported to be a definition. If so, and if what lies on both sides of the copula "is" seems obscure, and if we want a useful definition, then we will need to define either "God" or "being-itself." Tillich certainly seems to offer a number of synonyms for "being-itself." He uses, for example, "ground of being," "power of being," "depth of meaning," "abyss of meaning," etc. But all these alleged synonyms, Tillich admitted, would require careful elucidation, and whether we could be both careful and successful in elucidating them is open to serious question.

Perhaps the most revealing phrase which Tillich associates very closely with "being-itself" is "the power of being." At times, Tillich seeks to establish a distinction between the two concepts by suggesting that while being-itself is a non-symbolic concept, the "power of being" is metaphorical.

What can we say fundamentally about the nature of being?...
Nothing in terms of definition, but something in terms of

⁷⁸S.T., I., p. 211.

⁷⁹S.T., I., p. 235. To avoid possible confusion, I shall use the subscript "t" under the words "God" and "Theology" when I want to refer to Tillich's usage of these terms.

⁸⁰W.L. Rowe is certainly correct when he says "the task of elucidating Tillich's concept of God is largely one of explaining the two basic theistic statements." W.L. Rowe, op. cit., p. 11.

metaphorical indication and we suggested the concept of power for this purpose: Being is the power of being!⁸¹

And again he writes: "God is being-itself, in the sense of the power of being or the power to conquer non-being."⁸²

So it seems that "the power of being" is what the term "being-itself" means to Tillich; in other words, whenever the term "being-itself" is given content it is to be translated "the power of being." However, there is a good deal of peculiarity here. The point of Tillich's distinction seems that the term "power" is used symbolically when applied to God_t. But if the only non-symbolic term ("Being-itself") has no real content until it becomes symbolic, Tillich does not appear to have succeeded in maintaining the concept of being-itself as non-symbolic and hence meaningful in a "proper" or literal sense. His actual position seems to be that the "power of being" is a religious symbol for the presence and operation of God_t. Worse still, if the term "being" occurs in both definiens and definiendum without a possibly illuminating and explicable switch from literal to symbolic use of the terms, then we have the makings of a vicious circle or a vicious infinite regress.⁸³

VI. 9. Tillich's meaning of "God."

Tillich's phenomenological investigation of the meaning of "God" in every known major religion, including the Christian religion,

⁸¹ L.P.J., p. 37; see also S.T., I., p. 236.

⁸² S.T., II., p. 11.

⁸³ S.T., I., p. 236. However, in T.P.T., p. 335, Tillich, in reply to a criticism by J.H. Randall, rejects the literal equivalence of the phrases, and takes the position that "power" and "ground" are symbols, not synonyms, for being-itself.

leads him to say that gods are beings "who transcend the realm of ordinary experience in power and meaning, with whom men have relations which surpass ordinary relations in intensity and significance."⁸⁴

The term "God" involves a double meaning: (1) it connotes the unconditional transcendent, the ultimate, and (2) it has as referent an object endowed with qualities and actions. The first statement (1) is not symbolic, but the second (2) is "really symbolic," and it is this second meaning of God which is the "object" envisaged by the religious consciousness.⁸⁵

When we speak of God as being endowed with qualities and actions we are really speaking of what Tillich refers to as the God of theism, a being, who is transcended by the "God above the God of theism." The God of religious experience, according to Tillich, is the God of theism to whom we attach names like "the Almighty," "the Perfect God," or the "Highest Being." Tillich does not seem to object to the use of such terms or qualities, provided it is clearly understood that we are speaking symbolically, and not literally, for to use such terms literally is absurd.⁸⁶

We have already said that we should be careful to attach the right meaning to the word "God" whenever it appears. In the statement "God_t is being-itself," we are not talking about the symbol "God." I take it that the symbol "God" is the supreme symbol to which all (or at least, most) other symbols point, either directly or indirectly.

⁸⁴ S.T., I., pp. 211-212.

⁸⁵ R.E.T., p. 315.

⁸⁶ C.B., pp. 182-188; S.T., I., p. 235.

The symbol "God" points to the God_t who is being-itself.

The intended denotation of "God" in the statement "God_t is being-itself" I consider to be that of "the God above the God of theism," since otherwise I am unable to make sense of this phrase. I further consider that the concept of the God of theism is that which gives us the symbol "God." The justification for the statement that the symbol "God" is derived from the God of theism may be given as follows. According to Tillich, God is not a being, not even the most supreme being, because God is the "ground of being" and hence cannot be a being. A being is part of the finite world, and it seems that according to Tillich's way of thinking, the God of theism is a being. Now to use Tillich's jargon, it is an essential property of a symbol that it must have a concrete pole which must be negated and a positive pole which affirms that to which it points. The symbol "God" has in itself the essence of the concrete, if one equates the symbol with a being known as the God of theism. Also the symbol "God" can be used to affirm the reality of "God above God" which I take to be being-itself.

Tillich distinguishes three meanings of the word "theism" -- the unspecified affirmation of God (that is, theism does not say what it means when it uses the name of God), the name of "the divine-human encounter," and "theological theism."⁸⁷

Now theism in the first sense must be transcended because it is irrelevant, and theism in the second sense must be transcended because it is one-sided. But theism in the third sense must be transcended because it is wrong.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ C.B., pp. 182-184.

⁸⁸ C.B., p. 184.

Apparently what is wrong with theological theism is that God is conceived as "a being and as such a part of the whole of reality." The ambiguity of this phrase "the whole of reality" may cause confusion. If we take "reality" to mean the sum total of all there is, then God, it seems, will be part of it; but if by "reality" we mean the discoverable universe, then obviously he is not part of it. Tillich's idea is that God_t must be that which transcends the God of theism, a God_t in whom we have absolute faith. "Absolute faith" is a term peculiar to Tillich, but he seems somewhat undecided concerning the relation of absolute faith to the courage to be. At times, he considers these two terms to be synonymous, and at other times he considers absolute faith to be the cause of courage and so of the courage to be.⁸⁹ But whichever way it is, absolute faith requires a concept of the "God above the God of theism" since he must be that which is defined as "undirected" and "indefinable since everything defined is dissolved by doubt and meaninglessness."⁹⁰

However, I do not think that Tillich completely rejects the concept of the "God of theism," for it seems that he uses this concept in his completed scheme. We might suggest that the relation between these concepts might be:

"God" - the name - a word in the language of a theistic system, is a symbol of

God, the God of a theistic system, which in turn

is a symbol of

⁸⁹ C.B., pp. 174-176; 182.

⁹⁰ C.B., p. 176.

God above the God of theism, or the Ground of Being.

In Tillich's own theological system, the middle stage is often by-passed giving the impression of his complete rejection of that concept. Yet it seems that he does use that concept. He uses it to adapt from traditional Christianity a set of symbols pointing to the God above the God of theism. If, as we have tried to do, we express Tillich's concept of God by using the word "God_t" (namely, the God above the God of theism) then we should write God_t for "above the God of theism" in the interests of clarity. Then we could say that the symbol "God" points to God_t.

VI. 10. God as Being: The Symbolic-Unsymbolic Boundary.

In the adequate formulation which Tillich has finally found for the status of the proposition "God_t is Being-itself," this statement is one which occupies the boundary at which symbolic and non-symbolic utterances coincide.⁹¹ When this statement is uttered non-symbolically, it conceptualizes the presupposed idea of "being as a whole" which lies at the foundation of much philosophical thinking.

⁹¹S.T., II., p. 10. "If we say that God is the infinite, or the unconditional, or being-itself, we speak rationally and ecstatically at the same time. These terms precisely designate the boundary line at which both the symbolic and the non-symbolic coincide. Up to this point every statement is non-symbolic (in the sense of religious symbol). Beyond this point every statement is symbolic (in the sense of religious symbol). The point itself is both non-symbolic and symbolic." (My italics).

However, as Walter Kaufmann in his Critique of Religion and Philosophy (New York: Harper, 1958), says, contrary to Tillich's statement, "But this is surely neither a symbolic statement nor a non-symbolic statement: it is no statement at all, it is a definition -- and as it happens, a definition utterly at odds with the meaning of "God" in probably more than 95% of our religious tradition." (p. 140).

The concept of "Being-itself" may be symbolic at the same time that it is conceptual, expressing quite strongly the power of the ground of being. Being-itself and other ontological concepts may become symbols of ultimate concern even when one is not at that time "religiously" inclined. Because the idea of God_t as "the structure of being" may be either symbolic or non-symbolic, we suggest that it is an idea which spans the symbolic-unsymbolic boundary. More daringly we might say: it is equivalent to that boundary or to its spanning. Perhaps it should be added that "God_t is Being-itself" is not excluded from the class of non-symbolic statements because we suggest that it is a statement on the boundary. A boundary does not necessarily have to be disjunctive and exclusive.

Let us examine first the unsymbolic "side" of the symbolic-non-symbolic boundary. Assuming that it is genuine knowledge which is in question, we may say, with Tillich: in any cognitive effort directed towards "reality as a whole," there is a moment in which one appears to be on the verge of verbalizing (perhaps just to himself, perhaps to others) "the way things really are."⁹² This moment is a receptive (perceptive) moment, contrasted with a cognitive moment. However, when a person attempts to give inward (or outward) utterance to what he is going to say about "the way things really are," his insight is

⁹²Tillich contrasts "being as a whole" which he takes to be equivalent to "being-itself" to the "whole of being" (S.T., I., p. 18; T.P.T., p. 335; and p. 238 of this study). The Augustinian tradition, with which Tillich aligns himself in the context, is mystical. He writes: "If mysticism is defined as the experience of the identity of subject and object in relation to Being-itself" then the Augustinian tradition can rightly be called mystical. The soul then seems to be identical with God. But "in order to state the identity, an element of non-identity must be presupposed" (T.C., p. 14f).

changed into a content and content falls in to the pattern of subject-object. "The inherent ambiguity of language is that in transforming reality into meaning, it separates mind from reality."⁹³ Thus occurs a second moment, the moment when reality is conceptualized into an object of abstract knowledge. There may be, according to differing viewpoints, various concepts of Being-itself. So Tillich enquires:

But is "being-itself" symbolic, and therefore theological and not philosophical? I do not think so, because I believe that every philosophy has an implicit or explicit answer to the question: What does the word "is" mean? Even the anti-idealistic philosophers, who fight against the "block universe" of the Platonic-Neoplatonic tradition, have the notion of another, for instance, a dynamic-pluralistic universe. But it is a "universe." They say something about the character of being which logically precedes all statements about that which participates in being. Up to this point philosophy must go, and always does go.⁹⁴

This philosophical (non-symbolic) status of Being-itself appears to mean that one's immediate intuition is drawn into something cognitive and conceptual in intention, that is, that one's concept of "Being-itself" is abstract and non-symbolic however mistaken it may be. Whether we can say that because the intuition and the concept are not symbolic, that is, are not pointing beyond themselves becomes a

⁹³ S.T., III., p. 69.

⁹⁴ T.P.T., p. 335. W.L. Rowe believes Tillich made a shift away from pansymbolism in adopting the one unsymbolic statement in S.T., I., in 1941, but that Tillich has since shifted back towards pansymbolism. W.L. Rowe "The Meaning of 'God' in Tillich's Theology," Journal of Religion, XLII (1962), 274-286. William Holdern "Theology in Prospect" Journal of Bible and Religion XXVIII (1960), considers that Tillich's different versions of the one unsymbolic statement convinces him that Tillich's theological structure is "suspended in mid-air, because its central core is his concept of symbolism and this concept seems to be in ruins" (225). It seems to me that the idea of the unsymbolic-symbolic boundary does much to restore Tillich's position.

matter, according to Tillich, of the intention of the knowing subject.⁹⁵ It is a matter of his meaningful "direction." However, in his attempt to turn directly towards Being-itself or being as a whole, he finds that he must remain within the subject-object structure, or he is forced to negate in some way the implications of his finitude. This is only possible, according to Tillich, fragmentarily.

The non-symbolic element in all religious knowledge is the experience of the unconditioned as the boundary, ground, and abyss of everything conditioned. This experience is a boundary-experience of human reason and therefore expressible in negative-rational terms. But the unconditioned is not God. God is the affirmative concept pointing beyond the boundary of the negative-rational terms and therefore itself a positive-symbolic term.⁹⁶

Tillich sees the three terms, "the infinite," "the unconditional" and "Being-itself" as "precisely" designating the symbolic-unsymbolic boundary.⁹⁷ The passage just quoted appears to mean that conceptual knowledge (which stands at the boundary) in attempting to "grasp" God_t unsymbolically, merely becomes a knowledge comprising the conditions of existence and of finitude, but that the seeker is able to conceive the negation of his investigations, for "thought can

⁹⁵ Tillich's distinction between philosophy and theology is a distinction in terms of intention, or what might be called "existential stance." "The conflict between the intention of becoming universal and the destiny of remaining particular characterizes every philosophical existence.... The theologian carries an analogous burden. Instead of turning away from his existential situation,... he turns toward it... in order to make clear the universal validity... of what concerns him ultimately" (S.T., I., p. 25. My italics). Cf. P.E., p. 88. See also C.B., p. 81.

⁹⁶ P. Tillich. "Symbol and Knowledge" Journal of Liberal Religion, II (1941), 203.

⁹⁷ S.T., II., p. 10.

imagine the negation of everything that is."⁹⁸

The symbolic "side" of the boundary appears to have a close connection with what Tillich refers to as the "mystical a priori." Tillich describes this notion as both intrinsically religious and as intrinsic to knowing. The "mystical a priori" refers to "the point of identity between the experiencing subject and the ultimate which appears in religious experience or in the experience of the world as "religious," or "an awareness of something which transcends the cleavage between subject and object."⁹⁹ In this latter connection the "mystical a priori" is simply a statement of the epistemological principle of the identity of thought and being which, for Tillich, is the necessary presupposition of any thought, any knowledge, and any interaction of subject and object.¹⁰⁰

All ontological concepts may become symbols of our ultimate concern. But the elements of ultimacy and infinity are always within our being and when they are brought into conscious awareness we become "religious" in attitude and intention, and we must then express ourselves in terms of symbols of ultimate concern.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ S.T., I., p. 163.

⁹⁹ S.T., I., p. 9.

¹⁰⁰ I.H., p. 60: P.E., pp. 29f. The principle of the identity of thought and being, Tillich remarks, is "that principle prior to which thinking cannot take place." T.C., p. 81. See also S.T., I., p. 23, "The philosopher... assumes - and science continuously confirms this assumption - that there is an identity, or at least an analogy, between objective and subjective reason...."

¹⁰¹ Cf. S.T., II., p. 9, "If, however, they claim religious significance - a genuine possibility of all ontological concepts - their scientific function is dropped, and they must be discussed in theological terms as symbolic expressions of our ultimate concern" (S.T., I., p. 44).

VI. 11. Tillich's rejection of a supranatural God.

It is probably not too much of an exaggeration to say that Tillich regards the idea of supranaturalism as completely opposed to understanding the meaning of "God."¹⁰² He has never ceased to record his intense dislike of the notion that God is a being above or beyond the world.

Supranaturalism is not just an erroneous view of God; its effects are felt in many other concepts which belong to what may be termed the religious sphere. For example, Tillich considers that miracles, revelation, creation and eschatology are all given a wrong interpretation in any supranaturalistic framework.

Tillich agrees that history is intermingled with mythology, but any reference to the supranatural must be recognized as myth. "It is disastrous distortion of the meaning of faith to identify it with a belief in the historical validity of the Biblical stories."¹⁰³ This disastrous distortion must be repudiated, and "we must not

¹⁰²Why Tillich speaks of the "supranatural" in place of the more common word "supernatural" is not clear. It has been suggested that perhaps Tillich thinks that "supra" connotes more the spatial position of "above" and "beyond," while "super" stresses a superiority in power. This does not seem to me a good reason, since one of Tillich's favourite synonyms for "God" is "the power of being" (Cf. for example, L.P.J., pp. 35-45). In any case, "power" in Tillich's vocabulary, never means "power in a tyrannical harsh, unjust" way. However, it will be conceded that "supranatural" corresponds more closely to his basic objection against it, namely that it puts God spatially above the world in a place traditionally termed "heaven." In S.T., III., p. 363, Tillich states that the "prefix 'supra' indicates a higher level of reality in which divine actions take place without connection with world history." See also P.E., p. 16, where Tillich uses the terms, "supranature" and "supernature," the former word in connection with a type of history in which space is predominant, while "supernature" is used for a type of history in which time is predominant.

¹⁰³D.F., p. 87.

preserve or produce artificial stumbling blocks, miracle stories, legends, myths and other paradoxical talk."¹⁰⁴ Any assertions which interpret the Creation and the Fall as a scientific description are not giving a true account of either.¹⁰⁵

The story of Adam and Eve is an "old myth,"¹⁰⁶ and Tillich finds it absurd to attribute our troubles to Adam's disobedience.¹⁰⁷ Tillich terms "idolatrous" the faith of individuals for whom the virgin birth "is understood in biological terms, resurrection and ascension as physical events, the second coming of Christ as telluric or cosmic catastrophe."¹⁰⁸ It is fanciful to think of "dead bodies leaving their graves," experiencing some sort of resurrection perhaps at some very distant time.¹⁰⁹ Miracle stories are "a stumbling block for scholars and preachers and teachers."¹¹⁰ Tillich emphatically rejects the "popular superstition" of immortality. "Man should not boast an immortal soul,"¹¹¹ for the "assertion that the soul continues to live after the death of the body cannot be proved either by evidence or by

¹⁰⁴ S.F., p. 129.

¹⁰⁵ D.F., p. 83.

¹⁰⁶ E.N., p. 16.

¹⁰⁷ S.T., II., p. 130.

¹⁰⁸ D.F., p. 52; see also T.C., p. 66.

¹⁰⁹ N.B., p. 24.

¹¹⁰ N.B., pp. 37 and 53. See also, U.C., pp. 158-159, where Tillich says that if miracles imply a "suspension of the laws of nature" then "this is a demonic distortion of the meaning of miracle in the New Testament." See also S.T., I., p. 116 "Miracles cannot be interpreted in terms of a supranatural interference in natural processes."

¹¹¹ E.N., p. 114.

trustworthy authority."¹¹² On this point, one of his students complained to Nels F.S. Ferré about Tillich's disbelief in immortality, who wrote, on hearing this:

But by the time I had phrased my questions with depth and seriousness long enough and often enough, I knew that I had to give up my original understanding of what he taught. He actually did not believe in a Christian God who raises the dead and who works personally in human history.¹¹³

Tillich is quite clearly anti-supranaturalistic. He refers to "something... that is fundamental to all my thinking - the anti-supernaturalistic attitude."¹¹⁴ His chief complaint is that supranaturalism is dualistic, positing a "world" (heaven) "alongside of," "above," or "beyond" the natural world. Supernaturalism seems to suggest that the Christian message is really a series or revealed "truths" which has come into the basic ontological structure of self-world from somewhere "beyond" it. Under this dualistic system, the "truths" given to man or intended for man are really not receivable unless man becomes "something else than human in order to receive divinity." The supranaturalistic method recalls the docetic-monophysitic heretical traits, in

¹¹² D.F., p. 36; see also S.F., p. 106 and C.B., p. 169.

¹¹³ Nels F.S. Ferré, "Tillich and The Nature of Transcendence," Paul Tillich: Retrospect and Future ed. T.A. Kantonen, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 8. I think that Ferré is less than fair in his criticism here. Tillich may not believe in a God who "raises the dead," but it is hardly true to add that he does not believe in a God who "works personally in human history." At least, I can find no evidence in support of this last statement. Neither can I find any evidence that Tillich does not believe in a Christian God. If Ferré is referring to the God of theism, then Tillich even uses this concept as one of his symbols.

¹¹⁴ U.C., p. 158. Note that on page 157 and on occasions following this, Tillich uses the term "supernatural" a number of times but returns to the term "supranatural" on p. 161.

which the Bible became a book of supernatural "oracles" in which human receptivity was completely overlooked. According to Tillich, man cannot be interested in answers to questions he has never asked.¹¹⁵

Realizing the "gap" between God and man, Tillich tries to express that relation (God-man) by producing answers (theological in form) to the philosophical questions which man produces through his own efforts.

How, then, are we to understand this general universal "Being-itself" in which we all participate, thereby having the "power to be?" God or being-itself is this "power of being" "overcoming non-being."¹¹⁶ "Being" in this sense must not be thought of as a being; Tillich claims support in the medieval language which speaks of God as not esse but esse ipsum.

If we say "To be is....," then we must complete this phrase with some characterizing term. An advantage of medieval language in theology (not ens but esse) is that it offers us this verb-like form.¹¹⁷ If we say "to be is to be an X," or "to be a being is to X," then we have to ask, "What is X?" Berkeley's "esse is percipi" or Quine's "to be is to be a value of a variable" do not seem to fit the case although Quine's notion is more plausible than Berkeley's. Plato in the Sophist says that to be is to be able to act and to be acted upon.¹¹⁸ "Being,"

¹¹⁵ S.T., I., p. 65.

¹¹⁶ "Power" may be used synonymously with "ground."

¹¹⁷ See the adverbial form offered by some monists (in the next chapter) and the use of the word "esti." A.P.D. Mourelatos, op. cit., p. 269: "What are the logically possible constructions of the bare (subjectless and predicateless) esti or is?"

¹¹⁸ Plato, Sophist 247e.

Tillich informs us, "is inseparable from... the structure that makes it what it is."¹¹⁹ and the structure is described as the "power of being conquering non-being," or, if you will, "the power of being acting upon non-being." "Being" here must be interpreted in a teleological way, since it is the ordering power which "correlates" (to use a favorite word of Tillich's) the free potentialities on the one hand with the possibility of disintegration on the other. So we may say that the ground of being is that power in everything which produces order in particular actualities and maintains these actualities against possible disintegration.

If God is defined as the "Ground of being" or the "Power of being," but not himself an individual being, then he must have this power in particular things and this seems to be akin to Spinoza's conatus in suo essi perseverandi (the endeavour to persist in its own being) in everything that is. Every individual thing in nature endeavours to persist in its own being and this endeavour or conatus is its essence.¹²⁰ This seems to imply an immanent kind of God; He is certainly not a transcendent kind of God, the "Wholly Other" of classical theism or perhaps better, of deism. We are surely tempted to say of this immanent God that "in us He lives and moves and has his being."¹²¹ It is not difficult to see why certain critics of Tillich say that his thinking comes dangerously close to both atheism and

¹¹⁹S.T., I., p. 178.

¹²⁰Spinoza Ethics Part III, Pr. 7.

¹²¹St. Paul (Acts 17, 28) "For in Him we live and move and have our being."

pantheism.¹²²

Though the idea of the "Ground of Being" may intimate a very comforting doctrine, since the phrase suggests something solid on which to stand, it is less comforting when one wrestles to interpret what Tillich really means. As we have seen, the notion of the "power of being" is somewhat less difficult to conceptualize than the "Ground of being" since Tillich's God is not a static, rigid ground, but an active dynamic Power. But this does not mean that we are able to offer any real meaning of the phrase "the Ground of Being" or "Being-itself." If Being-itself or God is not a being apart from this world, it looks as though it (He) is the basic drive-structure of all particular things.

VI. 12. Summary.

In this chapter, we have dealt with the relationship between being, Being-itself, being as a whole and the totality of beings. Tillich's statement that "He (God) is the structure" has caused much difficulty in interpretation, and one wonders, since Tillich uses the statement very sparingly, whether he found some difficulty too. It is certainly puzzling to understand how we could explain the concepts of ultimacy, transcendence and unconditionality if the structure of being is regarded as determinate. The statement "Being-itself is God"

¹²²Cf. Sidney Hook, "The Atheism of Paul Tillich," R.E.T., pp. 59-64. See also George F. McLean, "Paul Tillich's Existential Philosophy" in Paul Tillich and Catholic Thought, op. cit., pp. 42-84.

or "God is Being-itself"¹²³ has been considered as the Boundary statement, in which case the concept of "Being-itself" may be sometimes interpreted as literal (philosophically) and sometimes as theologically symbolic.

Since Tillich has asserted quite vehemently that he rejects a dualistic supranaturalistic type of universe, in which the unconditional finds a habitation in the world above, many questions seem to "press" in on the reader. One may ask such questions as: "Is a supranaturalistic, kerygmatic, non-dialectical in Tillich's sense theology invalid?" Or again with Harvey Cox and the radical "God is dead" theologians: "Does Tillich really 'answer' modern man, that is, the secularized, urbanized, pragmatic, empirical-minded modern man?" Or with McKelway: "Has Tillich been consistent in his use of methodology, or has he not at times radically reversed his program and edged into supranaturalism?"¹²⁴ Another question arises when Tillich writes:

... supranaturalism in the sense of a theology which imagines a supranatural world beside or above the natural one, a world in which the unconditional finds a local habitation, thus making God a transcendent object, the creation an act at the beginning of time, the consummation a future state of things.¹²⁵

¹²³S.T., I., p. 279. "God is love; God is Being-itself; Being-itself is love" is valid only if "God is Being-itself" means the same as "Being-itself is God."

¹²⁴Harvey Cox, The Secular City (London: S.C.M. Press, 1965), pp. 79-81. Thomas J.J. Altizer and W. Hamilton, Radical Theology and The Death of God, (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966), pp. 46-48. A.J. McKelway op. cit., p. 247; on p. 66 he writes: "Tillich's ontology leads to essentialism, his method to existentialism; he wishes to correct the one with the other, and transcend them both." This is why, he suggests, Tillich's method becomes inconsistent: his ontological essentialism predominates over the methodological existentialism, for being determines and not vice versa.

¹²⁵P.E., p. 82.

We may ask how Tillich is using the word "transcendent" in the quotation given? And we can consider whether Tillich is a naturalist, and if so, we could look at the various types of naturalism. Tillich has been charged with being an atheist and this charge must be investigated.

Tillich has employed the method of correlation because he considers that it is the only method consistent with the interpretation of reality which appears to restrain both monistic naturalism and dualistic supranaturalism. But it seems that he sometimes edges very close to a supranaturalistic stance. Of course, should this prove to be the case then his interpretation of the relationship between God and man, which he claims to be totally immanent and totally dialectical, would be seriously threatened.

In the next chapter, I intend to look at some of these questions, and more especially to consider Tillich's position over and against a monistic pantheistic naturalism such as that proposed by Spinoza.

CHAPTER VII

TILLICH, SPINOZA, AND SOME "ISMS"

The conclusion reached in the last part of the previous chapter is so momentous that it causes us to pause and survey the new, or perhaps, the very different climate created. We are acquainted with attempts to try to make theology and the Christian faith meet some of the demands of the positivists. But the banishment of all "things" supranatural must seem a tremendous step towards what has very roughly been termed secularism. Many who must have associated in their minds supranatural and transcendent will have to ask if the eviction of the supranatural implies the eviction of the transcendent. Probably one will first have to consider what "transcendent" means to him, and then decide whether or not these two terms are closely associated or whether they are in fact synonymous.

This decision on Tillich's part to sweep away all supranaturalism has led theologians to enquire very seriously whether this assertion implies atheism, naturalism and/or pantheism. Tillich has been given all these labels. He has also been called an existentialist and a metaphysician.

Should Tillich's system then be interpreted theistically or non-theistically? A metaphysical interpretation has been given by

Rowe.¹ Rowe links "ultimate concern" with "Being-itself." From his rendering of Tillich's notion of "ultimate concern," it would seem that Being-itself could be the proper object of an ultimate concern about practically anything, though of course, many an alleged object of ultimate concerns would make that concern idolatrous. Tillich's assertion that "we are ultimately concerned only about the metaphysical ultimate, being-itself,"² is saved from contradiction by making ultimate concern the medium through which this metaphysical ultimate, being-itself, is experienced: "since man can encounter being-itself only through the concrete, his infinite quest for being is focussed on something concrete through which the power of being is experienced,"³ and "given this metaphysical background, the phenomenon of ultimate concern focussed on sacred objects can be explained as the way in which man's striving for being-itself expresses itself in actual life."⁴ As Rowe rightly points out, it is one thing to record the vast number of finite objects which have been (and are) the focus of ultimate concern, and quite another thing to explain this phenomenon.

For the explanation of the phenomenon of religion is given in terms of a particular metaphysics, and the question of the meaningfulness and truth of a metaphysics is not answered by any description, however accurate, of religious experience.⁵

¹W.L. Rowe, Religious Symbols and God (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

²W.L. Rowe, p. 17. It must be stated that Rowe does not accuse Tillich of atheism or pantheism.

³Rowe, p. 19.

⁴Rowe, p. 22.

⁵Rowe, p. 24.

So Tillich is a metaphysician, and it would be very remarkable indeed if he were not. The word "metaphysics" (at least until very recently) was a word of strong disapprobation in many quarters. But it is slowly returning to acceptance as a term of sound philosophical language; Rowe, I consider, is justified in facing the accusations both of sympathetically expounding the thought of metaphysicians and also that of implying that metaphysics is a necessary groundwork for all theological thought.

In the various sections of this chapter, we will study the charges of atheism, naturalism, pantheism, and Spinozism, which have been brought against Tillich. We will also study the relevant philosophical concepts of Spinoza and so we will be in a position to consider whether Tillich and Spinoza have anything in common. Since a very strong case can be made out for considering Spinoza to be both a naturalist and a pantheist, we can approach the question of whether these labels apply to Tillich by comparing and contrasting him to Spinoza.

VII.1. Tillich and Atheism

In recent times there has been a considerable volume of literature on the nature of atheism and its cognates.⁶ But it seems that the greatest difficulty to be faced is a linguistic one. No definition of "atheism" could hope to be in accord with all the uses of this word. However, we must distinguish carefully between atheism as a

⁶See, for example, the long bibliography in The Encyclopedia of Philosophy ed. Paul Edwards, (New York: MacMillan and the Free Press, 1967), p. 188f.

speculative standpoint and atheism as an existential reality. Speculative atheism, with which we are all familiar, was a specially notable position at the end of the seventeenth century. It was typical of that position that a person is regarded as an atheist if he maintains that there is no God in such a way that he takes the sentence "God exists" to express a false proposition. While traditional theism claims to possess rational arguments for the existence of God, atheism may claim to have rational arguments to disprove the existence of God. But as forms of intellectual philosophy about propositions' truth or falsity, both theism and atheism remain metaphysical affairs involving metaphysical speculation de natura deorum; neither has proved its case, and it is very difficult to see how such rational proof as either side desires is possible.

If we turn to the existential reality of being a complete atheist as a total person, we find that a definition of "atheism" is quite difficult to state. If it is acceptable to define the "object" of the religious life of a man as that to which he offers his supreme loyalty and devotion, then it would seem that every man who is consistently and strongly enough motivated by one primary aim has a religion. Tillich, in his own words, would say that every man has some object of ultimate concern, though it is possible for the object of that concern to be either a proper one or idolatrous. (To say this, of course, is to presume that all men are so motivated). On the existential level, it would seem that the problem is not one of asking, "Is there a God or no God"? but rather one of asking what kind of "object" it is to which a man offers his supreme loyalty.

A. MacIntyre⁷ quotes Tillich⁸ and in his commentary writes:

Clearly, however, the conversion of the believer is only so easy for Tillich because belief in God has been evacuated of all its traditional content. It consists now in moral seriousness and nothing more. Even if we were to concede Tillich a verbal triumph over the atheist, the substance of atheism has been conceded.⁹

MacIntyre seems to consider that, in Tillich's thought, "God" is just a name for the individual's ultimate concern interpreted purely as a psychological state without any reference to its object, and that in Tillich's thought, belief in God amounts to nothing more than moral seriousness.

The force of the term "atheism" turns upon the meaning which is attached to the word "God." If God is equated with a supranatural being whose existence is distinct from the world's existence, and if an atheist is one who cannot accept such a supranatural being, or indeed a being of any kind distinct from the World, then it would appear that MacIntyre has cause to consider Tillich an atheist. But criticism like MacIntyre's discussion is on a speculative level, and any accusation concerning atheism is reduced to the way in which we offer our speculative definition.

⁷Alasdair MacIntyre, "God and the Theologians," Encounter, XXI, (1963), 3-10.

⁸S.F., p. 57. "The name of this infinite and inexhaustible depth and ground of all being is God. That depth is what the word God means. And if that word has not much meaning for you, translate it, and speak of the depths of your life, of the source of your being, of your ultimate concern, of what you take seriously without any reservation. Perhaps, in order to do so, you must forget everything traditional that you have learned about God, perhaps even the word itself. For if you know that God means depth, you know much about Him. You cannot then call yourself an atheist or unbeliever."

⁹MacIntyre, op. cit., p. 6.

On the other hand, what if esse homo is esse homo religiosus?

What if homo religiosus cannot "live" without a god or without a faith? What if this is not simply a psychological fact, but an ontological exigency? That would put the problem of atheism in a different light. Whatever the case may be on the speculative level, on the existential level there are no atheists - at least among those strongly and consistently enough motivated by a primary aim to count as persons. If a man does not worship a theological ultimate, he will worship an idol made of wood, of gold or of ideas, and this will be his God. So there can be no persons who deny God. There can only be idolatrous persons whose ultimate concern "deifies" an unworthy object. And this is the very position which Tillich espouses.

Walter Kaufman accuses Tillich of using ancient formulations of belief to describe his own lack of belief.¹⁰ God is one's ultimate concern, and the only question is whether a person's ultimate concern is truly ultimate or merely idolatrous.¹¹ Only a person who lacks any sort of ultimate concern can therefore be termed an atheist, and this he says is why Tillich can disavow atheism; and "it turns out that millions of theists may really be atheists, while such avowed atheists as Freud and Nietzsche aren't atheists at all."¹²

Sidney Hook finds in Tillich's thought "the recognition of atheism as a religion among others, with truth claims that seem better

¹⁰ Walter Kaufmann, The Faith of a Heretic (Garden City: Doubleday, 1961, p. 44).

¹¹ Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 95.

¹² Kaufmann, op. cit., p. 132.

warranted, on Tillich's own showing than its rivals."¹³ Hook, however, is using the word "atheism" in the very restricted sense of unbelief in an orthodox theistic God.

The God whom many millions have worshipped is dead, according to Tillich, because He has been conceived as a Being instead of being-itself or being-as-such.¹⁴

In the place of God as a Transcendent Being, Tillich offers an ontological concept of man "according to which our individual selves are part of the Universal Self or Ego which is the Teutonic correlative of being-as-such." Our egos are "painfully separated" from the Cosmic Ego, and it is only when our egos are "dissolved and reintegrated" shall we find peace. Hook concludes that "Tillich's God is like the God of Spinoza and the God of Hegel." Both Spinoza and Hegel were regarded as atheists simply "because their God was not a Being or an Entity."¹⁵ He finally concludes that Tillich's God is the "all-in-all of pantheistic spiritualism."¹⁶ Unfortunately Hook does not argue his case very well and we are given only dogmatic statements instead of telling us just how Tillich's God is like Spinoza's God and Hegel's God.

David H. Freeman states very definitely that Tillich is "an atheist, if, by atheist one means anyone who denies the existence of the God of theism."¹⁷ He also is using a very narrow definition.

¹³ Sidney Hook, "The Atheism of Paul Tillich" in R.E.T., p. 60.

¹⁴ Hook, op. cit., p. 60.

¹⁵ Hook, op. cit., p. 62.

¹⁶ Hook, op. cit., p. 60.

¹⁷ David H. Freeman, Tillich (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1962), pp. 9-42.

We have now given an airing to the claims of those critics who charge Tillich with atheism. Tillich himself has something to say too. He does not accept the definitions put forward by critics namely, (1) the denial of God, or (2) the denial of the God of traditional theism (a-theism). Stating that "God is the fundamental symbol for what concerns us ultimately," Tillich seems to doubt whether atheism is possible.

Atheism, consequently, can only mean the attempt to remove any ultimate concern - to remain unconcerned about the meaning of one's existence. Indifference toward the ultimate question is the only imaginable form of atheism. Whether it is possible is a problem which must remain unsolved at this point.¹⁸

In other words, the only logical type of atheism would be a complete lack of ultimate concern, that is, total indifference to the meaning of one's life, and such an attitude seems to be all but impossible for a coherently minded person with a definite aim in life. Though someone may try frantically to maintain a "cynical unconcern," he cannot since he is passionately concerned about one thing, namely, his unconcern.¹⁹ Tillich even questions the so-called atheism of both Sartre and Marx declaring that they are really humanists whose answers come from "hidden religious sources" which are "matters of ultimate concern, though garbed in a secular gown."²⁰ So Tillich really considers that genuine atheism is not humanly possible and that even atheists stand in God - "namely, that power out of which they live, the truth

¹⁸ D.F., pp. 45-46; Cf. S.F., p. 57; Perspectives, p. 20.

¹⁹ N.B., p. 158.

²⁰ S.T., II., pp. 25-26; see also T.P.T., pp. 346-347.

for which they grope and the ultimate meaning of life in which they believe."²¹

A god who is a being beyond the world or who is a probable hypothesis cannot be of ultimate concern. Such a view of deity is not so much false as a distortion. Atheism, for Tillich, is the protest against this distortion: "in the face of an objectively existing God, atheism is right,"²² and it is as "atheistic to affirm the existence of God as to deny it."²³

It is worthwhile taking a close look at this account of "atheism" and Tillich's way of using the term. He states that "atheism is an impossibility and an illusion,"²⁴ and yet "atheism is a correct response to the objectively existing God of literalistic thought."²⁵ These two statements surely lead us into a very peculiar position. How can an impossibility and an illusion be the correct response to anything? Tillich is using the word "atheism" in his stipulative sense when he wants to prove or support one set of propositions, and in a quite different sense when he finds that the ordinary usage suits his purposes. It is little wonder that MacIntyre said that Tillich

²¹ S.F., pp. 127-128.

²² I.H., p. 47.

²³ S.T., I., p. 237. John H. Hick has pointed out that when Tillich says that God does not exist, he means that God does not exist in the way that man exists. He is simply trying to formulate a discrimination between the necessary and unconditional being of God and the contingent being of man. See John H. Hick, "The Idea of Necessary Being" Princeton Seminary Bulletin, LIV (1960), 11-21.

²⁴ P.E., p. 214.

²⁵ On the Boundary (New York: Scribner's, 1966), p. 65. See also S.T., I., p. 245; T.C., p. 25; S.F., p. 45; C.B., p. 185; and P.E., p. 82.

had triumphed over the atheist by a verbal trick. It is interesting to note that though Tillich often goes back to the etymological derivation of a word, he has avoided mention of this in the case of atheism: A-theism would mean being "against" the God of traditional theism and this would be strong grounds for accepting an atheistic basis to Tillich's concept of Being-itself.

We then might notice three points in this discussion. First, the reasons some critics have given for calling Tillich an atheist are so narrow and have so little to do with the dictionary sense as to be of little real value. Second, Tillich quite definitely wants to retain his distinction between ultimate concerns which are genuine and those which are idolatrous. Third, Tillich defines the word "atheism" so widely that we are all turned into theists. Would he want to say that a person whose ultimate concern is idolatrous, or quasi-idolatrous, is really a theist? This seems to me to be both odd and very peculiar.

Tillich's way of defining "atheism" is derived with commendable consistency from what he terms his theo-logical system, but it seems to me that he is playing with words. As Kai Nielsen has well said, "that is not how the religious language-game is played.... Tillich can play his own grandiose game, making up his rules as he goes along."²⁶ In fact Tillich has so converted "atheist" from its dictionary sense of meaning a person who believes that there is no God, that "atheist" becomes "believer" by redefinition, and this simply will not do.

²⁶ Kai Nielsen, "Is God so Powerful That He Doesn't Even Have to Exist?" R.E.T., p. 277.

VII.2. Types of Naturalism and Existentialism.

A naturalistic philosophy and a religious view of the world are often taken to be incompatible or at least, two alternatives between which men must choose. In a sense, this is true. At least it is true when naturalism is considered to be a theory such that a complete philosophy can be worked out in terms of physical (atomistic) entities and/or of blind and unconscious forces. But it is also true when religion is identified with some particular set of beliefs, arising out of the context of some specific historic or mythical culture, beliefs to be accepted by faith²⁷ and laid down as an authoritative orthodoxy.

There appears to be no standard meaning given to the word "naturalism." It might be considered a philosophical position, empirical in method, that regards everything that exists or occurs to be conditioned in its existence or in its occurrence by causal factors within one great all-encompassing system of nature, however "spiritual" or purposeful or rational some of these things and events may in their functions and values prove to be.

Let us, for a moment, consider naturalism as the very antithesis of supranaturalism, and let supranaturalism be construed as the dogma that God is a being whose existence is distinct from and quite independent of the existence of the empirical world. Then it would certainly be true to say that Tillich is, or has leanings toward being

²⁷Tillich says that faith is not "the acceptance of factual statements or valuations taken on authority, even if the authority is divine, for then the question arises, On the basis of what authority do I call an authority divine?" S.T., III., p. 131; see also D.F., p. 31.

a naturalist. For he does not accept either (a) the existence of such a supernatural being or (b) even the propriety of saying that God is a being. It would seem that these reasons are in the mind of the Catholic theologian, G. Weigel when he claims that Tillich is a naturalist. However, Weigel does not actually state any reasons but declares dogmatically that Tillich's theological system "on ultimate reduction (is) purest naturalism." Noting Tillich's rejection of "natural theology," Weigel states that Tillich's theology is "more seriously a naturalistic theology."²⁸

Another commentator, A. Dulles is more cautious, affirming that "to many of his critics it has seemed that, in his rejection of the supernatural, Tillich falls into a sort of naturalism."²⁹ Dulles notes that this criticism has been made by G. Weigel and by Nels Ferré, from the Catholic and the Protestant side respectively. From the non-theistic point of view, J.H. Randall has criticized Tillich on this same topic.³⁰ To these criticisms, Tillich has offered a very short, terse reply: "My thinking is not naturalistic."³¹

Investigation into Tillich's idea of naturalism sometimes suggests that his idea of it was a spectrum of Isms which could include scientific naturalism, the position of the noted American philosopher

²⁸G. Weigel, "The Theological Significance of Paul Tillich" in Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought ed. Thomas A. O'Meara and C.D. Weissner (Iowa, Dubuque: The Priory Press, 1964), p. 17.

²⁹A. Dulles, "Paul Tillich and the Bible" Theological Studies XVII (1956), 362f. Nels Ferré, "Tillich's View of the Church" in T.P.T., pp. 262f.

³⁰J.H. Randall, "The Ontology of Paul Tillich" in T.P.T., p. 149.

³¹P. Tillich, in his reply Catholic Thought, op. cit., p. 23.

of science Ernst Nagel. Tillich writes:

But naturalism means the identification of being with nature and the consequent rejection of the supernatural. This definition leaves the question of nature and the natural quite open. Nature can be described mechanistically. It can be described organo-logically. It can be described in terms of a necessary progressive integration or of creative evolution. It can be described as a system of laws or of structures or as a mixture of both. Naturalism can take its pattern from the absolutely concrete, the individual self as we find it in man, or from the absolutely abstract, the mathematic equations which determine the characteristic of power fields. All this and more can be naturalism.³²

Tillich also points out that naturalism may remove "the individual 'existing' man who stands between the infinite and the finite and never can be understood as a part of the whole of natural objectivity."³³ This statement by Tillich may well be compared with that of Ernst Nagel, who considers that naturalism is an attempt to express what is often termed "the world view of modern natural science." Nagel's open-ness about what counts as naturalism is more restricted than Tillich's, but Nagel is far less restrictive than, say, Epicurus or Lucretius. It is:

the inclusive intellectual image of nature and man which naturalism supplies that sets it off from the comprehensive philosophies.... Naturalism embraces a generalized account of the cosmic scheme and of man's place in it, as well as a logic of enquiry.³⁴

According to Nagel, the first principle of naturalism

is the existential and causal primacy of organized matter in the executive order of nature. This is the assumption

³² C.B., pp. 118-110; see also P.E., pp. 34-35.

³³ P. Tillich, "Kierkegaard in English" American-Scandinavian Review, XXX, (1942), 256f. Quoted by J.L. Adams, op. cit., p. 23.

³⁴ Ernst Nagel, Logic without Metaphysics (Illinois: The Free Press, 1956), p. 6.

that the occurrence of events, qualities, and processes, and the characteristic behaviours of various individuals are contingent on the organization of spatio-temporally located bodies, whose internal structures and external relations determine and limit the appearance and disappearance of everything that happens.³⁵

This statement of Nagel's appears at first sight to be an expression of materialism rather than naturalism. However, it is not reductive materialism. Reductive materialism is the view that predicates descriptions of non-material entities can be systematically replaced by complex physical descriptions, and this may be done without any loss of truth value. For example, thinking or possessing sets of ideas may, at least in principle, be reduced to statements about measurable physical occurrences, e.g. brain events which would be equivalent to the original "psychological" assertion. This "equivalence" between the "mental" and the material is not equivalence of sense or intension but only an "equivalence" in the sense in which a phenomenological description of colors, for example, is equivalent to a physical description in terms of the frequency of light waves. Nagel's statement of naturalism is not of this reductive type. In fact, this reductive materialism is something he is attempting to avoid. His type of naturalism is rather of a dualistic type in which it would be consistent to conceive of non-material things existing, that is, "things" that are not "material bodies" or "organizations of material bodies." Examples of such non-material entities given by Nagel are "modes of action, relations of meaning, dreams, joys, plans and aspirations."³⁶

³⁵ Nagel, p. 7.

³⁶ Ibid.

However, for Nagel, such non-material entities ought to be thought of as nothing more than "forms of behaviour or functions of material systems" and although "indefeasibly parts of nature" they cannot be considered "causal agents in their own realization or in the realization of anything else." Thus Nagel removes these non-material entities from performing any fundamental role in determining any natural processes. In other words, although mental events do exist (in some sense of "exist") and are not reducible to brain states, they are without any causal power of their own to affect the course of nature.³⁷

It will be readily noticed that these non-material entities constitute what existentialists would regard as something "essentially human" or, perhaps, something in the domain of "living experience." It would seem then, that on this view we would have to regard the world of the "essentially human" as playing no fundamental role in shaping the course of nature or history. Man, as a human being, is an inhabitant of the world of nature but has no distinctively personal power to contribute or oppose the causal forces of nature.

Tillich, in the statement quoted above, called attention to the different types of naturalism, the purely scientific type consisting of laws and structures, the mechanistic (materialistic or reductive naturalistic) and a type which is, in itself, quite open accepting both monistic or dualistic interpretations. As we have just noticed, Nagel's view of naturalism is dualistic since he conceives of non-material things existing as well as material things. Spinoza's naturalism is certainly monistic.

³⁷Nagel, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

Nagel's form of naturalism may also be regarded as a form of physical monism since whatever exists or happens to be is "natural" in the sense that explanations of such events or occurrences are (or may be at some future time) available through methods which, paradigmatically, are acceptable in the field of natural sciences. This implies the rejection, in principle, of the possibility of any events of entities which cannot be investigated. This type of investigation may be scientifically conducted in the light of what we may call Ayer's strong sense of "verification."³⁸ On the other hand, naturalism does not preclude the possible "existence" of non-natural entities if there is any evidence (perhaps in Ayer's weak sense) of their affecting the observable behaviour of natural objects, especially man himself.³⁹

³⁸ A.J. Ayer, op. cit., pp. 9 and 37: "A further distinction which we must make is the distinction between the "strong" and the "weak" sense of the term "verifiable." A proposition is said to be verifiable, in the strong sense of the term, if, and only if, its truth could be conclusively established in experience. But it is verifiable, in the weak sense, if it is possible for experience to render it probable."

³⁹ Perhaps we ought to distinguish between "pure material" objects and "impure material" objects which Strawson calls "persons." Strawson posits persons as primitive entities such that we can only maintain that they are those "things" to which both M-predicates (predicates ascribing corporeal characteristics) and P-predicates (predicates ascribing states of consciousness) are equally applicable. P.F. Strawson, Individuals (London: Methuen, 1959), p. 101. Tillich makes the same sort of distinction. In Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology, ed. Carl E. Braaten (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 35, he writes: "There are two fundamental concepts of nature which I distinguish, the material and the formal concept of nature. The material concept refers to things in nature, usually to subhuman or nonhuman things. This is what we usually call nature, all the realities that are the subject matter of physics, biology, botany etc. The formal concept of nature refers to human beings, but of course man's body belongs as well to the material concept; it is as natural as any animal body. But it contains a different element. It has mind or spirit."

Materialism, though not incompatible with naturalism, is a more rigid conception than naturalism. The philosophy of materialism would insist that matter is the primary reality.⁴⁰ In fact, some interpretations would regard matter and the relations between the various forms of matter as the only constituents of reality. In this case, no room would be found for what has been referred to as "non-natural" objects. On this very point, Tillich says:

If the whole of reality is reduced to inorganic processes, the result is the non-scientific ontological theory which is called materialism or reductionist naturalism. Its peculiar contention is not that there is matter in everything that exists - every ontology must say this including all forms of positivism - but that matter which we encounter under the dimensions of the inorganic is the only matter.⁴¹

It is this "strong" type of materialism which is rejected by many writers. Tillich asserts that the objectifying tendencies in industrial society, in its capitalistic and its totalitarian forms, must be strongly resisted. Treating man as an object - as a lump of matter with no distinctively personal potency and value, as a mere part of a machine - means the destruction of man's subjectivity, in other words, of man's whole life.⁴² The whole heterogeneous cluster of philosophies called Existentialist offers intense protests against this type of

⁴⁰J. Dewey, Experience and Nature (Chicago: Open Court, 1925), p. 73 writes "What we call matter is that character of natural events which is so tied up with changes that are sufficiently rapid to be perceptible as to give the latter the characteristic rhythmic order, the causal sequence." But matter is so frequently thought of as a non-empirical substance prior to all change that Dewey fears to continue to use this word freely.

⁴¹S.T., III., p. 19.

⁴²S.T., I., p. 174.

dehumanization. Scientism, "the slavish imitation of the method and language of science," the "imitation of what certain people mistake for the method and language of science,"⁴³ must be completely repudiated. This seems to extend the scope of the scientific method beyond the realm of its legitimate application, that is, into the realm of existential personal human existence. John Wild considers that the materialistic tendencies in contemporary thought are giving serious concern to many thinkers. He writes:

The scientific, calculative mode of understanding, thoroughly grounded and prepared for by the whole course of Western metaphysics, has now become dominant in our time, and is making exclusive claims for itself as the only sound and verifiable way of looking at all things, including man. These absolute claims, however, are unjustified, for objective science has limits... it is incapable of giving us an adequate grasp of our existence in the world. It is blind to what is essentially human and, if left to itself, will destroy us.⁴⁴

It is little wonder that Tillich is so violently opposed to this type of materialism which he refers to as the "ontology of death."⁴⁵

The other basic principles of naturalism are, according to

Nagel:

the manifest plurality and variety of things, of the qualities and their functions, are an irreducible feature of the cosmos, not a deceptive appearance cloaking some more homogeneous "ultimate reality,"

and

the sequential orders in which events occur or the manifold relations of dependence in which things exist

⁴³ Karl Popper, The Poverty of Historicism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), p. 105.

⁴⁴ John Wild, "Symposium: Martin Heidegger, The Philosophy of Martin Heidegger" Journal of Philosophy LX (1963), 664-677.

⁴⁵ S.T., III., p. 19.

are contingent connections, not the embodiments of a fixed and unified pattern of logically necessary links.... In brief.... irreducible variety and logical contingency are fundamental traits of the world we actually inhabit.⁴⁶

So the three principles of naturalism, Nagel would say, are (1) the causal primacy of organized matter in the order of nature, (2) pluralism and (3) the contingency of all existence.

The principle of the contingency of all existence would simply imply that the world (including man himself) is the result of causes that are neither purposive, rational nor intrinsically valuable - the result of one case of The Absurd after another. The occurrence of events appears to exhibit some sort of order which enables us to trace recurrent designs and so to predict, in the sense that science and technology predict, for practical purposes. But none of these things that have evolved in time is necessary or intended. They are "given," they are mysteries.⁴⁷

This form of materialistic naturalism places a radical limitation on thought where all assertions must be "factual" assertions, empirical and scientific in form. This seems to imply that philosophical

⁴⁶Nagel, op. cit., p. 9.

⁴⁷The influence of Charles Darwin has created the attitude that we are brought into being by "chance" interaction of events. His theory of the origin of man seems to displace man from his former situation within the eternal, rational, purpose-willed order. This modern sense of radical contingency in which the species came into being and depart into non-being occur "because of causes but for no reasons," as Nagel says. Tillich, however, warns that it is disastrous for theology if theologians prefer one scientific view to another on theological grounds. "This illtimed resistance of theologians from the time of Galileo to the time of Darwin was one of the causes of the split between religion and secular culture." S.T., I., p. 130. See also Perspectives pp. 159 and 161.

statements, being non-scientific, are non-assertive in form, and are descriptions concerned with the analysis, clarification and meaning of words. "Philosophical theology has its source in linguistic facts rather than in facts about the world, and... despite appearances, it gives us information only about language."⁴⁸ The identification of all assertions about what there is with factual or empirical assertions radically restricts reflective thought. Beyond the "given" lies nothing, no ground, no ultimate order, no reason.

In the philosophy of empirical naturalism, this category of contingency appears as an ontological category, though the limiting relation of thought to reality is still discernible. Nagel states that while there are causes for events, there are no reasons. The causes themselves have no reasons, for things just are, and the being of the "given" has no explanation.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Alice Ambrose Lazerowitz, "Linguistic Approaches to Philosophical Problems" in Richard Rorty, The Linguistic Turn (Chicago: University Chicago Press, 1967), p. 147. See also D.M. MacKay, "Language, Meaning and God," Philosophy (1972), Section 5, "Linguistic Theology," 9-10.

⁴⁹ Nagel, op. cit., pp. 7-9. G. Santayana, The Realms of Matter (New York: Scribner's, 1930), p. 94, expresses the same idea though given in words having a metaphorical, poetic form: "Matter is the indivisible wind which, sweeping for no reason over the field of essences, raises some of them in to a cloud of dust: and that whirlwind we call existence." For Heidegger, our being is defined as "being there," not "for this or that reason" but just being there, being posited - for the essence of being there is the experience of being thrown or cast into existence. Our existence is thrown, but there is no thrower and so no reason for the throw. "As something thrown, Dasein has been thrown into existence. It exists as an entity which has to be as it is and as it can be. That it is factually, may be obscure and hidden as regards the 'why' of it; but the that-it-is has been disclosed to Dasein.... The caller is Dasein in its uncanniness: primordial, thrown Being in the world as the 'not-at-home' - the bare 'that-it-is' in the 'nothing' of the world." Martin Heidegger, Being and Time trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 321. Tillich maintains that creation has no purposes beyond itself. S.T., I., p. 263.

Tillich completely rejects materialism or reductive naturalism, and while he rejects also much of materialistic naturalism, there are some tenets which, with certain reservation, he appears to me to accept. There are of course, causes for events, and Tillich knows this but he rejects the idea that there must be a first cause and that from the contingency of all substances there must be a necessary substance. "The first cause is a hypostasized question," he says, "not a statement about a being which initiates the causal chain." In the same way, Tillich dismisses the question of a "necessary substance."⁵⁰ In fact, "the same contingency which has thrown man into existence may push him out of it," and he considers that it is in this respect that contingent being and causality are the same thing.⁵¹

It seems to me to be quite an open question whether or not Tillich would agree that there is no thrower and so no reason for the throw. It looks rather as if he would. He cannot give an account of the Fall into existence, from the potential to the actual, from dreaming innocence to existential guilt and tragedy, since both the essential stage and any prior to it are hypothetical. It would seem that there is, then, no thrower, and we must agree with Tillich that the transition is "irrational."⁵²

Of the three main principles of Nagel's naturalism, namely, causal primacy of organized matter in the order of nature, pluralism and contingency, I think it reasonable to say the last two are shared

⁵⁰ S.T., I., p. 209.

⁵¹ S.T., I., p. 196. See also footnote 49 in this chapter.

⁵² S.T., III., p. 91. See also Chapter II above pp. 29-42.

by many existentialists. Concerning the first principle, even existentialists might go along with this provided that it be agreed that in at least some very loose sense, man has a "place" and a "purpose" in the scheme of things. This would lead quite naturally to the tragic situation in which man finds himself.⁵³ But the vast horizon of "existentialism" must be appreciated if one wants to understand Tillich's relation to existentialism. I believe that Tillich accepts existentialism as a partial but important expression of the position of contemporary man. His concept of man as an immediately experiencing subject (not an objectifying, epistemological subject) and his rigorous application of the concepts of estrangement and anxiety to existence point to his sympathies lying with existentialism. But it would be quite misleading to call Tillich an existentialist on the grounds that it is difficult to state just what existentialism is. It would be misleading also because he is more fundamentally an "essentialist," a philosopher in the tradition of the logos-ontology and perhaps touched with idealism. For example, when Tillich uses the word "being" he is more often referring to "finite essence" than to "finite existence." Addressing psychologists and psychiatrists, he says:

I can only pose the question of a possible philosophical foundation for psychotherapy on the basis of my own thought, in which the existentialist element has a definite place, although I would not call myself an existentialist.⁵⁴

⁵³Cf. S. Kierkegaard, Repetition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 114. "My life has been brought to an impasse. I loathe existence.... Where am I? Who am I? How came I here?"

⁵⁴P. Tillich, "Existentialism and Psychotherapy" Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry (1961), 9. See also "The Nature and Significance of Existential Thought, Journal of Philosophy LIII (1956), 739-748.

For Tillich, the term "existentialist" may be given to those philosophies which have important elements of the existentialist kind within their philosophical systems. The philosophies "in which the question of human existence in space and time and of man's predicament in unity with the predicament of everything existing is asked and answered in symbols or their conceptual transformation" are designated as existentialist.⁵⁵ Using this idea, then Tillich is said to be "fifty-fifty."⁵⁶

VII.3. Tillich as a Naturalist.

We may recall how A. Dulles has said that in his rejection of supernaturalism, Tillich falls into a sort of naturalism. We have already described two sorts of naturalism. We have noticed that naturalism and existentialism are alike in some ways but are quite different in others. Tillich's philosophical theology is in some ways existentialist, and in some ways it is quite different. We may now ask the question, what sort of naturalism may be ascribed to Tillich if indeed we may ascribe any at all?

The adoption of a naturalistic method is often a starting point for those who wish to describe and explain what they and other men have experienced without resorting either to transcendent supernatural entities or to anti-scientific world views. But this does not mean that naturalism (in its weak form) so conceived methodologically overlooks human wisdom embodied in the great early

⁵⁵ S.T., III., p. 203.

⁵⁶ Perspectives, p. 245: see also U.C., p. 2.

supranaturalistic or idealistic philosophies. It seems to me that there is a wise form of naturalism which seeks to incorporate within its framework all the best critical and creative thought of earlier man; it seeks also to organize and adjust such thought as to make it clearly relevant to the achievement of the Good Life within Nature. Emphasis is laid, quite naturally, on some kind of verification (or justification) of assertions through empirical methods, if possible, though recourse to human experience and reasoning about it is also accepted. Miss T.Z. Lavine writes:

The naturalist principle may be stated as a resolution to pursue inquiry into any set of phenomena by means of methods which administer the checks of intelligent experiential verification in accordance with the contemporary criteria of objectivity. The significance of this principle does not lie in the advocacy of empirical method, but in the conception of the regions where that method is to be employed. That scientific analysis must not be restricted in any quarter, that its extension to any field, to any special set of phenomena, must not be curtailed -- this is the nerve of the naturalistic principle. "Continuity" of analysis can thus mean only that all analysis must be scientific analysis.⁵⁷

I take it that Miss Lavine is holding that what she calls scientific does not automatically exclude the conclusion that some phenomena are worthy of praise, awe, reverence, etc.; or that the belief in scientific analysis is not incompatible with belief in a cognitivist analysis of some value terms.⁵⁸ I consider that a very important methodological point in this quotation is that naturalism of this type does

⁵⁷Thelma Z. Lavine, "Naturalism and the Sociological Analysis of Knowledge" in Naturalism and The Human Spirit ed. Y.H. Krikorian (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), pp. 184-185.

⁵⁸For the non-cognitivist view of value judgments see the Positivist Naturalism of A.J. Ayer's Language, Truth and Logic, op. cit., pp. 107-112.

not reject any knowledge that can be verified in some way. Specifically it should be noticed that the experiential method of verification and also the necessity for a continuity of analysis are stressed.

I believe that in Miss Lavine's conception of the naturalistic method we are coming reasonably close to a type of naturalism which Tillich would not reject. Looking at what Tillich has to say on the points I have stressed, we find that Tillich too, is strongly in favour of verification procedures. He agrees that within its proper domain the verifying test belongs to the nature of truth and commends the positivists for their insight. The safest test, he considers, is the repeatable experiment. But in other fields, the experiential method of verification or a combination of the experimental and experiential methods are necessary; and if the experiential method is used the testing must go on continually. All these points which Tillich makes are identical with those which Miss Lavine makes.⁵⁹ It

⁵⁹See S.T., I., pp. 102-105. Tillich recognizes two cognitive attitudes - the controlling and the receiving. (See Chapter III, pp. 68-114). Controlling knowledge is verified by the "repeatable experiment." Receiving knowledge requires for its "verification" the experiential method which is neither "repeatable, precise nor final at any particular moment." Receiving knowledge is verified by the "creative union of two natures, that of knowing and that of the known." The experiential method of verification differs from the experimental method in that testing has to be continually checked. "Future stages of the same life-process may prove that what seemed to be a bad risk was a good one and vice versa" (S.T., I., pp. 102-103). So, in a way, the experiential method of verification is similar to the pragmatic method of verification, in that one has to make the best judgment at one period of time, a judgment which may have to be altered should new circumstances call for a new assessment, and this checking must go on continually. It might be suggested that as a result of this experiential method of testing, Tillich found that some religious symbols were not meeting the required standard at the present time, and so had to be either re-interpreted or abandoned. The types of verification, experiential and experimental, are not to be regarded as mutually exclusive, since often both types are brought into play at the same time.

seems pertinent at this juncture to note that Tillich lauds "the way in which recent naturalism has disavowed its former reductionist methods... suggests an increasing insight."⁶⁰

In our researches we have really been considering some of the different ways of interpreting what is meant by the word "God." The first way which we will look at is the way in which Tillich advocates using the word "supranaturalism," and as we have seen Tillich rejects the conception of God as a being "above" ("beyond") and "separated from" the world, having his own existence as a being distinct from Nature. His main argument against the supranatural type of God is that the infinity of God is transformed into something which is merely an extension of the categories of finitude.

The second way of interpreting the meaning of the word "God" involves the philosophy involved with naturalism. This second way identifies (in some sense of "identify") God with the universe, with its essence or with special powers within it.⁶¹ "God" is the name of the power and meaning of reality, but He must not be identified with the totality of things. We have argued that Tillich quite clearly rejects any type of materialism or reductive naturalism, but we have argued that he also appears to accept a number of the tenets of naturalism, yet this must not be construed to mean that we are labelling him a naturalist. Tillich accepts quite a number of the tenets of existentialism, though it would be an error to label him an existentialist.

⁶⁰ S.T., I., p. 173.

⁶¹ S.T., II., p. 6.

Though this second way involves the identification of God with the universe in some sense or other, Tillich does not mean that everything that is, is God. Nor does the phrase "Deus sive Natura" mean that God is the totality of natural objects. "No myth or philosophy has ever asserted such an absurdity."⁶² God is rather to be identified with the creative power of nature, Natura naturans, the creative ground and unity of all things, both material and formal. Tillich asserts that as a consequence of the word "God" being interchangeable with the word "universe," the word "God" becomes "semantically superfluous."⁶³ I am not certain at this point whether this is just an emotive statement or whether Tillich is making this as an assertion which is to be taken seriously. If it is just a type of propaganda to persuade us to reject naturalism, then we know how to consider the statement. But Tillich does not do this sort of thing, and so I dismiss the suggestion that Tillich is a propagandist. So we must treat his assertion as a serious one.

First, it is not the fact that "an infinite distance" is denied that has the consequence of rendering the word "God" superfluous. It is the identification of the universe with God which certain naturalisms assert, (for example, Spinoza's monistic naturalism), which might allow one to say, (though not necessarily correctly), that either the word "God" or the word "universe" may be dispensed with as superfluous. If Tillich seriously intended to uphold this argument, I am at a loss to explain why, since the reference of "God"

⁶²S.T., II., p. 6.

⁶³S.T., II., p. 7.

is, without question, identified with Being-itself, or with the "Abyss" or with the power of being and meaning, Tillich has not assumed that at least some of these terms are superfluous.

The type of argument that if two words in their uses have the same referent or reference, then one of the words is superfluous is not only a very weak one, but it would be quite unacceptable in any linguistic sense. For many a naturalist, such as Spinoza, the "equation" of Nature with God is an identification of the Bedeutung, of two expressions which tells us a new important truth. To state that the Morning Star is the Evening Star is not a new lexicographical move about Sinn but a new astronomical move to help us to relate properly what we took to be distinct entities. The possible scientific discovery stated by "the virus (V_m) with chemical properties (P_1) (P_2) (P_n) is the cause of all known forms of cancer" would not make the phrase "cause of all known forms of cancer" a superfluous expression. To offer the philosophical, religious or mystical conclusion that Nature is God, to use the formal mode, is to say that what many call "the orderly totality or system of natural events" should be treated with the same sense of love, mystery, dependence, reverence, awe, beauty, perfection etc., with which Judaeo-Christian believers cherish what they take to be a Transcendent Deity. The crucial importance of many non-lexicographical uses of " $- = -$ " or " $_$ means $-$ " is brought out by Frege's distinction between meinung qua Sinn and qua Bedeutung and King-Farlow's distinction between "meaning" qua "how

we DO use a word" and qua "how we ought to use it."⁶⁴

Most words in known languages have as synonyms or quasi-synonymous renditions words or phrases to assist clarification, otherwise there would be no synonyms and the word "synonym" might have rather a different set of uses in English.

We have already remarked on the identification of "God" with "Being-itself." The words "God" and "Being-itself" as used by Tillich are meant to have the same Reference but they are used to serve very different roles in Tillich's philosophical theology. "God" is a linguistic term used as a symbol in what Tillich refers to as "ecstatic" or "self-transcending" language, while "Being-itself" is to be a term of paradigmatically rational discourse. If then Tillich allows himself the "equation" of the words "God" and "Being-itself," it seems very unfair or unjust not to allow naturalists the same privilege, without charges of superfluity.

One of Tillich's main arguments against naturalism is that it denies "the infinite distance between the whole of finite things and their infinite ground."⁶⁵ Tillich is not concerned to deny that awe, reverence, wonder etc. are consistent with naturalism.⁶⁶ His main

⁶⁴ See Translations From the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege ed. by Peter Geach and Max Black, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969), pp. 62-63 and Jeremy D.B. Walker, A Study of Frege (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), pp. 101-102. John King-Farlow, Reason and Religion, op. cit., Appendix 1.

⁶⁵ S.T., II., p. 7.

⁶⁶ See S.T., II., p. 6 where Tillich notes that in modern naturalism the religious quality of these affirmations has almost disappeared, especially in materialism. This seems to imply that there is (or was) a type of religious naturalism at some period, present or past.

point is that naturalism cannot represent religious awe as what it is, namely, something which stems from the infinite distance between finite beings and Being-itself. And this, it must be conceded, is a very telling point.

Tillich in a most interesting passage writes:

The semantic situation reveals the failure of naturalists to understand a decisive element in the experience of the holy, namely the distance between finite man, on the one hand, and the holy in its numerous manifestations on the other. For this, naturalism cannot account.⁶⁷

The word "naturalism" is used twice without any reference to what brand of naturalism is meant. If he is referring to materialism or reductive naturalism there is no doubt that Tillich is correct, since there cannot be any known distance between location A and location B if there is no location B. If "naturalism" means some weak scientific type of naturalism then perhaps the question may be debatable; if "naturalism" refers to Tillich's own self-transcending or ecstatic naturalism or even in some sense to both Dewey's pattern of naturalism or Spinoza's mystical, monistic naturalism, then I think that Tillich would have to withdraw his charge.⁶⁸

The other point of interest is the alleged failure of naturalism to "understand a decisive element in the experience of the holy." This decisive element brings us right back to the problem of the infinite distance. Holiness, for Tillich, is an "experienced phenomenon" experienced when we "stand" before "something which induces in us a feeling of awe, wonder, amazement, commitment perhaps and reverence.

⁶⁷S.T., II., p. 7.

⁶⁸ Relevant passages in Dewey's naturalism will be discussed a little later in this chapter.

That "something," for Tillich, may be any secular object (since secular objects are potentially holy) if and only if that secular object (holy) is a vehicle directing us to the object of ultimate concern. That the "experience of the holy" in all its "numerous manifestations" is not part of the naturalist's creed, is what Tillich wants to stress. Holy objects are not, of course, holy in and of themselves, but are the representations of man's ultimate concern.⁶⁹ In some forms of naturalism the status afforded to the Universe or may be the finite created world is regarded as holy, and not, as it should be, a representation or vehicle of the holy. This would seem to suggest that naturalism is, in Tillich's language, demonic, or at least, a point of view that readily induces demonization.

Another point of interest in our discussion of naturalism returns us to that persistent, thorny problem of the subject-object dichotomy. Randall (a naturalist) asserts that Tillich assumes "without question that the epistemological subject-object distinction is absolutely ultimate."⁷⁰ This remark of Randall's is extremely misleading on at least two counts. First, for Tillich, the subject-object relation would hardly be accepted as a distinction, but a very interdependent relation, since Tillich regards subject-object as a polarity in which neither is prior to the other. I think it would be conceded that a naturalistic theology or philosophy would regard the world as an epistemological object, ontologically prior to the observer as subject. One could also argue that a naturalist would regard

⁶⁹ S.T., I., p. 216.

⁷⁰ J.H. Randall "The Ontology of Paul Tillich," T.P.T., p. 153.

the nature and qualities of the universe which make it a proper object of religious awe as prior to any expressions of feeling which the subject (man the observer) has towards these qualities and structures. Tillich, on the other hand, would contend that "epistemology, the 'knowledge' of knowing, is part of ontology,"⁷¹ and not something separate and distinct.

Second, the subject-object relation as an ontological structure is not ultimate or absolutely ultimate, since it is possible, according to Tillich, to look beyond it to Being-itself. The question, "what precedes the duality of self and world, of subject and object?" is answered by Tillich: "only revelation can answer this question."⁷² Naturalism, of whatever brand, would hardly be prepared to accept this notion of revelation.

How, then, are we to answer the question, "is Tillich a naturalist?" It seems that in terms of the argument so far we cannot give a definite answer, except to point out that he does show leanings toward some forms of naturalism but at the same time he produces some very sound arguments against accepting almost any unqualified form of this "ism." When we have looked at the third way of interpreting the meaning of the word "God," we just may be able to go a little further in deciding the question.

There remains a third way of interpreting the meaning of the word "God" --- Tillich's own way. The emphasis which has been placed

⁷¹S.T., I., p. 71.

⁷²S.T., I., p. 174; Cf. S.T., I., p. 94: It is at this point that reason "asks for revelation."

on the dichotomy, naturalism-supranaturalism, is rejected by Tillich since any idea of God must transcend this dichotomy. He offers his way, the way of self-transcending or ecstatic naturalism.⁷³

This kind of naturalism, accepted by Tillich, is spoken of in this way:

The term "self-transcendent" has two elements: "transcending" and "self." God as the ground of being infinitely transcends that of which he is the ground. He stands against the world, in so far as the world stands against him, and he stands for the world, thereby causing it to stand for him. This mutual freedom from each other and for each other is the only meaningful sense in which the "supra" in "supranaturalism" can be used. Only in this sense can we speak of "transcendent" with respect to the relation of God and the world. To call God transcendent in this sense does not mean that one must establish a "superworld" of divine objects. It does mean that, within itself, the finite world points beyond itself.⁷⁴

This passage occurs in the Introduction to Tillich's Volume II of his Systematic Theology, an introduction designed to clarify certain statements in Volume I. But I still find this passage very difficult to elucidate. Self-transcendence is that dynamic quality of life which drives it beyond itself. The way Tillich uses this term "self-transcendence" involves connotations concerning certain aspects of human experience. Self-transcendence is experienced by man as self-awareness.⁷⁵ In order to be conscious of himself, man must in some sense

⁷³See Catholic Thought p. 307: It is easy to call a theology which rejects supranaturalism, naturalistic. It is more difficult but very necessary to find adequate expressions for what inadequately could be called "self-transcending" or, even bolder, "ecstatic" naturalism. See also T.P.T., p. 341.

⁷⁴S.T., II., p. 7.

⁷⁵S.T., III., pp. 37 and 92.

stand beyond or outside of himself.⁷⁶ Though self-transcendence is present in all life (in all being), it comes to fulfillment in man and is experienced as self-consciousness.⁷⁷ Tillich suggests a distinction between horizontal and vertical transcendence.⁷⁶ Horizontal self-transcendence refers to any movement from finite potentiality to finite actuality; vertical self-transcendence is the movement beyond the finite world in the direction of the Infinite and thus is the transcendence of finitude. It is this latter type which is more distinctive of man since he is the being who can stand beyond his entire finite being and ask questions about what "The Infinite" could mean or designate or point toward. All finite life strives, (we might here note a similarity to the concept of conatus in Spinozism), toward the infinite but only man is aware of striving.

In Tillich's thought, freedom, self-transcendence and self-awareness are closely connected. All are "rooted" in the ability of life to go beyond itself and to become "self-related" (that is, to become both subject and object). Man is free in that in conscious thought he can stand outside of himself and look at himself. He is able to analyze himself as an object, looking objectively at himself. So in self-transcending naturalism, man stands back and looks at his contingent being and this leads him to ask the question of God.⁷⁸

⁷⁶S.T., III., pp. 86f and 91.

⁷⁷S.T., III., p. 88.

⁷⁸It is not so much the difficulty of interpreting the word "self" though this is difficult enough. The greater difficulty is to try to show that the concept of transcendence (of all possible experience) is intelligible. Gordon D. Kaufmann, "Two Models of Transcendence: An Inquiry into the Problem of Theological Meaning" in The

Tillich also relates self-transcendent to meaning:

Every living being develops what is enveloped in its very nature. This development, however, is not the production of an entirely new creation. It is the actualization of a definite potentiality; but it does not break through the circle of actuality and potentiality as history does. History transcends the natural limitations in creating the new which does not follow from the old by evolution. The new, which occurs wherever history occurs, is meaning. In creating meaning, being rises above itself.... In creating meaning, being gains freedom from itself, from the necessity of its own nature.⁷⁹

As Tillich speaks of self-transcending or ecstatic naturalism, it would seem that these two terms are closely related. Tillich is aware that we speak of an ecstatic moment of happiness with one's beloved, but he wants to salvage the word for a much broader and deeper meaning but which is still related to its ordinary usage. He goes back to the root meaning of the word: to stand outside itself. This meaning is revealed since it is related to the expression, "being beside oneself" (with exaltation, joy, grief, etc.). For Tillich, ecstasy describes the condition in which some of the limitations of the finite structure have been overcome. One stands beyond one's own ordinary existence.

Heritage of Christian Thought, (Essays in honor of Robert L. Calhoun ed. Robert E. Cushman and Egil Grisliis, (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), writes: "I will not seek to establish this by providing a definition of "transcendence" and then defending it, but rather by indicating points and dimensions of our ordinary experience which can appropriately be regarded as examples of finite experiences, and which, therefore, can be utilized as models for imagining, conceiving and defining the transcendence in which theology is interested." Interpersonal and teleological methods are cited. Tillich's idea rests on the model of teleological transcendence.

⁷⁹I.H., p. 273, my italics. See also I.H., p. 253: "The freedom of a being from the necessity of its nature is its power of elevating itself to meaning. In realizing its own meaning it is within itself and beyond itself at the same time."

Revelatory insight is received in ecstasy in the sense that reason has gone beyond its normal structure. Just as in love the person is beyond himself without losing his integrity, so in revelation reason transcends itself without being destroyed. Thus any revelation which requires the sacrifice of reason must be false.

We made a remark earlier about John Dewey's naturalism. I feel that it must be conceded that on the whole Dewey's philosophical position has much with which Tillich would disagree. We could think of Tillich's stand against pragmatism but all theologians and all naturalists are trying to consider how to improve the lot of existential man.

Dewey is certain that many people who are deterred from taking part in religious exercises either on intellectual or on moral grounds, "are not even aware of attitudes in themselves that if they came to fruition would be genuinely religious."⁸⁰ Perhaps at this point we think of Tillich's ultimate concern, a concern which we have whether we are aware of it or not. Both thinkers consider that we should interpret religious faith in terms of a "natural world" and Dewey explains that the true religious thought must be divorced from supranaturalism.

The idea of invisible powers would take on the meaning of all the conditions of nature and human associations that support and deepen the sense of values which carry one through periods of darkness and despair to such an extent that they lose their usual depressive character.⁸¹

⁸⁰ John Dewey, A Common Faith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), p. 9.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 14-15.

Though the interpretations appear outwardly very different, they spring from a common conviction, one expressed by Dewey when he says that the "actual religious quality in the experience... is the effect produced."⁸² Dewey believes in a new concept "a reality of reconciliation and reunion, of creativity, meaning and hope."⁸³ Tillich's concept, similar in some ways, is called New Being. Dewey's faith is in the ideal as possible, not in the ideal which is already actual but something hidden from view:

For all endeavour for the better is moved by faith and what is possible, not by inference to the actual. Nor does this faith depend for its moving power upon intellectual assurance or belief that things worked for must surely prevail and come into embodied existence.⁸⁴

The realm of nature may not be finished or perfect, but it does assure that risks (and for Dewey, faith involves an infinite risk) intelligently taken are not just leaps into the absurd. These risks, taken on behalf of ideals can be well grounded in what does exist. In another passage Dewey refers to the "one God," a God not to be confused with either the God of the philosophers or the God of Spinoza.⁸⁵

"Nature," Dewey says, "may not be worshipped as divine even in the sense of the intellectual love of Spinoza."⁸⁶ Especially significant

⁸²Ibid., p. 14.

⁸³S.T., I., p. 49. Tillich himself sheds light in this agreement when he says "Idealism and naturalism differ very little in their starting point when they develop theological concepts" (Ibid., p. 9).

⁸⁴J. Dewey, op. cit., p. 25.

⁸⁵J. Dewey, Human Nature and Conduct (New York: Modern Library, 1922), p. 330.

⁸⁶J. Dewey, The Quest for Certainty (New York: Capricorn Books, 1960), p. 306.

is Dewey's notion that God is real since his presence is felt and makes an "experienceable difference." "It is the active relation between ideal and actual to which I give the name 'God.'"⁸⁷

We have been exploring the extent of Tillich's leanings toward naturalism, that is, the extent, nature and degree of his concept with those of traditional naturalists. Considering the evidence we feel that there are many tenets of naturalism which are accepted by Tillich, but the evidence is partial and insufficient to call him a complete naturalist.

Naturalism makes piety towards nature and courage to face nature's contingencies and potentialities requisite for any rational inhabitant of our existential system of things and events. Whatever bearing naturalism may have for other ethical ideals and principles, it is a metaphysical position which gives at least these two virtues a sanction arising from the very nature of things.

One of the most courageous and pious Naturalistic philosophers of any period was Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677). Spinoza cheerfully accepted condemnation from his Synagogue and from his community, as well as the suspicions of the ruling Christians,⁸⁸ in order to develop a mystical, monistic Ontology. Spinoza's resounding assertion

⁸⁷J. Dewey, A Common Faith, op. cit., (Paper Back edition) p. 51.

⁸⁸"He that knows himself to be upright does not fear the death of a criminal, and shrinks from no punishment; his mind is not wrung with remorse for any disgraceful deed: he holds that death in a good cause is no punishment, but an honour, and that death for freedom is glory." Spinoza, Tractatus Theologico-Politicus "Freedom of Thought and Speech." (Published 1967 under a fictitious foreign imprint -- author's name suppressed). Quoted by Lewis Samuel Feuer, Spinoza and the Rise of Liberalism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. xii.

concerning nature is that it "consists of infinite attributes, each of which expresses eternal and infinite essence."⁸⁹ The phrase, Deus sive Natura, used by both Erigena and Spinoza, does not imply that God is only identical with Nature as a passive totality. God, for Spinoza, is natura naturata, but only in a less important sense; from a more insightful perspective, he is natura naturans, creative nature, the ground of being, of change, of order and development of all natural objects, the symbol of unity, harmony and the power of being.

Tillich tries to formulate his ideas, especially in his notion of self-transcending naturalism, in such a way that his position not only replaces the supranaturalism of traditional theism (and deism) but which goes beyond naturalism. To attempt to ascertain whether Tillich does indeed succeed in going beyond the naturalistic tradition, I intend in the next section to look at Spinoza's philosophy, and then consider Tillich's philosophical theology in the light of the philosophy of Spinoza.

VII.4. Spinoza.

In this section on Spinoza, I intend to give an exposition of those parts of his metaphysical theory which are relevant to the purpose in hand, without any criticism of his ideas.

Spinoza's metaphysical theory, may, from one point of view, be regarded as a theory of salvation founded upon a theory of reality. Human well-being can only be properly understood in the light of a knowledge of human nature and of a world into which man is born,

⁸⁹Spinoza, Ethics Part I, Definition 6.

lives, and after a brief duration, dies. These again can only be understood in terms of a knowledge of finite man and universe as related to a reality and a source that is eternal. The Ethics of Spinoza is divided into five parts, of which the first part is devoted to an account of the divine nature and the eternal universe which is its actuality, which is the exhaustible determinate expression of an infinite indeterminate power. For this study, I shall confine myself, mainly at least, to the first part of the Ethics of Spinoza.⁹⁰

Two of the terms central to the metaphysics of Spinoza are evident from the initial axiom in the first part, where reality is divided into substance and mode. "Everything which exists, either exists in itself or exists in something else."⁹¹ "What exists in itself, and is thus conceived through itself, is a substance."⁹² "What exists in something else, through which it is conceived, is a mode or affection of substance."⁹³ There is nothing that does not fall into one of these two categories, Substance and Mode.⁹⁴

Substance, for Spinoza, does not stand for "matter,"⁹⁵ nor does it appear to be like Aristotelian, Lockean or the common sense interpretation of substance. Aristotle had regarded substance as the

⁹⁰I am using Spinoza Selections ed. John Wild, (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1930), unless otherwise stated.

⁹¹Ethics I A 1. In future, Ethics will be abbreviated to E.

⁹²E. I D 3.

⁹³E. I D 5.

⁹⁴In future I will write Substance with a capital S and Mode with a capital M when writing about Spinoza's Substance and Mode except in direct quotations.

⁹⁵See this chapter, footnote 40.

primary category, "that which is asserted of a subject but of which everything else is asserted."⁹⁶ He had held that the world is composed of a plurality of individual substances arranged in a hierarchical order culminating in an immaterial substance, the Prime Mover. Aquinas had accepted this view of substance in the thirteenth century and it seems to have dominated traditional Western thought.⁹⁷ But Descartes modified it by dividing substances so emphatically into two basic kinds, "extended substance" and "thinking substance," which he conceived in dualistic fashion as completely different from each other. For Descartes, the world is composed of a plurality of "thinking substances" or mind, and of "extended substances" or bodies, and a man consists of a mind and a body which causally interact although in their essences they have nothing in common with each other. Substance, for Spinoza, is not an underlying something to which qualities adhere, but "that which is in itself and conceived through itself: that is, the conception of which does not require the conception of

⁹⁶ Aristotle Categories Chapter V, and Metaphysics Z, 3 and 13. However, it should be noted that Aristotle insists, in various places in Metaphysics Z, that individuality and separability belong especially to "substance." There is some similarity here with Spinoza. The difference lies in the fact that Spinoza considers that causal dependency on another detracts from this individuality and separability, that is, this independence.

⁹⁷ For Locke, a substance, in the general sense, is nothing but the subject, or substratum, in which qualities are said to adhere, or exist or subsist or rest; a substance of a particular kind is a collection or combination of qualities together with the subject or substratum in which they all adhere. The subject or substratum is not perceptible to the senses; whatever may be said to be perceived by us through the senses is a quality. Locke Essay II. 23.

anything other from which it must be formed."⁹⁸ In other words, it is self-existing and self-manifest being, self-actualizing and self-certifying being, or we may call it "power in action."

Spinoza accepted the concept of Substance as the basis of his metaphysics but he radically transformed it in accordance with a monistic view of the world. His definition of Substance is somewhat similar to Aristotle's definition of substance, but the addition of the phrase "conceived through itself" and his explanation of Substance as not needing "the conception of another thing from which it must be formed" suggests a radical departure from the traditional one. Spinoza's idea of Substance indicates that nothing can be called a substance which depends on something else as its cause, so that only a being that is necessary in the sense of "cause of itself" can be called Substance. Hence, for Spinoza, the plurality of finite substances of Aristotle (and Aquinas), and the two substances of Descartes must be denied the status of substance.

Spinoza places these "plurality of finite substances" and Descartes' dual substances in the class of Modes. Mode is the antithesis of Substance while maintaining their asymmetrical relation: "By mode, I understand the affections of substance, or that which is in another thing through which also it is conceived."⁹⁹ "In another" is, of course, used by way of contrast with the "in itself" of the definition of Substance. Whereas Substance is self-existent and self-manifest, Modes depend for their existence on what transcends, or lies

⁹⁸E., I. D 3.

⁹⁹E., I. D 5. See footnote 96 above.

beyond its own proper nature, and can be conceived only as so related. The original "other" of the Modes is Substance itself as "cause-in-action" of "power-in-action" of which the Mode is the actual being derived from and supported by that action. Substance, then, actualizes and manifests itself in a Mode: Substance is the active cause and sustaining power, and Mode, the effect, is dependent on Substance for its being.

Spinoza uses the word "Attribute" to assist one in understanding the "composition" of his system. "By attribute, I understand that which the intellect perceives of substance, as if constituting its essence."¹⁰⁰ The definition of Attribute as constituting the essence of Substance as perceived by the intellect enables Spinoza to acknowledge the two different ways in which Substance is known to us and at the same time to deny the status of Substance to them. He asserts that "thinking things" and "extended things" are either Attributes of Substance or affections of Attributes.¹⁰¹ So Spinoza recognizes the division Descartes had made between "thinking" and "extended" substances, and that this Cartesian division of supposed substances does correspond to something real in God-or-Nature. Their real distinction reduces Thought and Extension to the status of Attributes, which express the essence of Substance, but are not Substance themselves.

Reality, says Spinoza, consists in infinite Attributes, each of which is infinite in its kind. From the divine nature of reality an infinite number of things proceed eternally, for "the divine

¹⁰⁰ E., I., D 4.

¹⁰¹ E., I., prop. 14.

nature possesses absolutely infinite attributes, each one of which expresses infinite essence in suo genere."¹⁰² Substance is infinite inasmuch as it is not limited by another substance; the Attributes which constitute the essence of Substance are infinite in like manner. A body is finite because it is limited by another body; but extension, which is the "ground" of bodies, is not limited by another extension; it is infinite in its kind. Likewise, an idea is finite in that it is limited not by bodies but by other ideas; but thought itself, which is the "ground" of ideas, is not limited by anything of its own kind. Each Attribute, thought as well as extension is infinite in suo genere. But although Substance, which is the ground of the Attributes, possesses infinite attributes, we know only two of these, namely, thought and extension.¹⁰³ The Attributes are through their infinite nature closely allied to Substance.¹⁰⁴ In Letter 9, Spinoza writes:

By Substance I mean that which is in itself and is conceived through itself, that is, whose conception does not involve the conception of some other thing. I mean the same by attribute, except that it is attribute with respect to the intellect, which attributes such and such a nature to Substance.

But in his Ethics, Spinoza clarified his thought for he saw that infinite Attributes logically imply one only Substance as their ground, and secondly he saw that the intellect could only properly attribute to Substance that which was the essence of Substance. In other words, Substance, as ground, implies infinite attributes, as consequents, and that the ground of the intellect "which attributes" is in God, in the

¹⁰²E., I., 16.

¹⁰³E., II., 1 and 2.

¹⁰⁴In his earlier work, Spinoza spoke indifferently of Substance and substances or attributes. See Letters 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 and 9.

infinita idea dei.¹⁰⁵

The definition of Mode as an affection of Substance "in another thing through which it is conceived" enables Spinoza to reduce the plurality of substances asserted by earlier philosophers from Aristotle to Descartes to modifications of Substance. Thus, the concept of Attribute is used to take account of the distinction between mind and body and the concept of Mode takes account of the plurality of things we experience through sense perception.¹⁰⁶ However, Spinoza does not deny reality to the many Modes or objects of ordinary experience as if they were but illusions. They are real enough, but their reality is dependent upon the reality of Substance in which they have their being.

The definitions of Substance, Attribute and Mode enables Spinoza to assert as self-evident the fundamental principles of his monistic metaphysics: there is one Substance which is self-dependent, and upon which everything depends; its essence consists of Attributes, of which the mind knows only two, thought and extension; and it (Substance) manifests itself in very many Modes. These Modes appear to our senses as separate but independent objects, which are really nothing but modifications of the single unique Substance itself.

There is only one Substance "for if there were anything by which 'substance' could be produced, the knowledge of substance would

¹⁰⁵ There has been much controversy about the question: "Why can we know only two Attributes when infinite Attributes proceed from God, who is the ground of the intellect which attributes?" See Letters 65, 66 and 70.

¹⁰⁶ E., I., prop. 25 Corol.

be dependent upon the knowledge of its cause, and therefore it would not be substance,"¹⁰⁷ since Substance is by definition "conceived through itself." In other words, Spinoza has so strictly defined Substance in what is termed the geometric method used by him, that nothing whose attributes are the effects of outside causes could be called a Substance.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, it must be the cause of itself and the reason-or-justification for itself, (causa sui). This means to say that its essence necessarily involves its existence, that it must be infinite, for if it were finite it would be limited by something outside itself, and so would not be single or unique.¹⁰⁹

This one, necessarily existent, infinite Being or Substance is identified with God, since God is defined as "Being absolutely infinite, that is to say, substance consisting of infinite attributes, each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence."¹¹⁰ Thus the one and only Substance is shown by definition to be God. This identification of God with the one Substance which includes all things in itself is expressed by the phrase "God or Nature," Deus sive Natura. This leads Spinoza to an explanation of the causal relationship between God and Modes, or finite things.

First, all things which can be conceived by God must follow

¹⁰⁷ E., I., Pr. 6.

¹⁰⁸ Staurot Hampshire, Spinoza (London: Penguin Books, 1951), p. 37.

¹⁰⁹ E., I., Pr. 8.

¹¹⁰ E., I., Df. vi. Note that Spinoza identifies Nature with God because he thinks that the worthwhile properties of the theologians' Deity, the properties that would make God appropriate object of reverence, exclude separation between Creator and creatures, exclude Divine anger etc.

from the necessity of his nature.¹¹¹ As efficient cause of everything which exists, "God acts from the laws of his own nature only and is compelled by no one."¹¹² In a sense God is a free cause, for Spinoza defines a "free" anything as one "which exists from the necessity of its own nature alone, and is determined to action by itself alone."¹¹³ Thus finite things emanate or "flow" from the necessity of the divine nature, which is identified with its freedom. Spinoza ridicules those who consider God has freedom of will either to create or not to create or freedom to create things in addition to or different from those that already exist. For

all things have necessarily flowed, or continually follow by the same necessity, in the same way as it follows from the nature of a triangle, from eternity to eternity, that its three angles are equal to two right angles. The omnipotence of God has therefore been actual from eternity, and in the same actuality will remain to eternity.¹¹⁴

Second, God is "the immanent and enduring, and not the transient cause of all things."¹¹⁵ Since Spinoza denies that there is anything other than God and argues that all things are in Him, God, then, is "the cause of the things which are in himself."¹¹⁶ Spinoza does, however, distinguish the divine causal activity from the Modes or finite things within which it acts by the scholastic distinction between

¹¹¹E., I., Pr. 16.

¹¹²E., I., Pr. 17.

¹¹³E., I., Df vii.

¹¹⁴E., I., Pr. 17 Sch.

¹¹⁵E., I., Pr. 18.

¹¹⁶E., I., Pr. 18.

natura naturans or "God in so far as he is considered as a free cause," and natura naturata or "everything which follows from the necessity of the nature of God," that is, "all the modes of God's attributes in so far as they are considered as things which are in God."¹¹⁷

Third, the existence and action of every finite thing is determined by another finite cause. Although God is the ground of all finite things, they "must follow from God, or some attribute of God, in so far as the latter is considered to be affected by some mode," that is, not immediately but through intermediate causes.¹¹⁸ Thus God as natura naturata is a system of finite things which determine and are determined by one another.

Fourth, God does not seek to attain a goal or a good by his activity. To think of him acting for some good would imply that his nature was imperfect, since he needs or seeks nothing. Hence there is no "will" of God, causing him to act. Since "thought is only one of his infinite attributes, will and intellect are modes of God on the same level as other modes." If intellect and will belonged to God's eternal essence, they

... would have to differ entirely from our intellect and will, and could resemble ours in nothing except in name. There could be no further likeness than that between the celestial constellation of the Dog and the animal which barks.¹¹⁹

If we were willing to accept Spinoza's assertions of this identity of the perfection of Deus sive Natura and of human fulfilment

¹¹⁷ E., I., Pr 29. Sch.

¹¹⁸ E., I. Pr. 28.

¹¹⁹ E., I., Pr. 17, Sch.

through grasping man's oneness with nature and seeing all sub specie aeternitatis, and if we modify some of his philosophy to include the scientific progress made since this time, it seems that the points that have been stated earlier are not incompatible with, at least, the first part of Spinoza's Ethics, but indeed, follow from his axioms.

VII.5. Tillich and Spinoza.

Man's place in nature is a very old problem which has been frequently and variously treated by the great philosophers of the world. In ancient Greece, Plato and Aristotle analyzed the problem and gave what appeared to them a convincing answer. Lucretius, a Roman, in his long poem, produced a different and startling solution. Christian theology, though primarily concerned with the God-man relationship and the life hereafter, has formulated a number of theories about man and his relation to nature, or, as Tillich would say the self-world. However, we must bear in mind the fact that one of the components of the relation, man, is in part gaining mastery over his environment as time passes, and so the relationship man-nature is constantly changing.

Man is not an object which can be analyzed once and for all, so it is unlikely in view of these two changeable factors that any final answer to the man-nature question will be given. Spinoza in his equation "God or Nature" appears to have so combined or at least to have so closely associated God with Nature that the two problems of Christian theology, namely, God-man and man-nature are or may be considered as one problem. Spinoza's remark that man's place in nature was originally one of bondage but is potentially one of freedom reiterate the continually changing situation.

In this section I want to compare three of the fundamental ideas of Tillich with similar ideas in the philosophy of Spinoza. First, I shall deal with the most important and basic segment of Tillich's system, his conception of God; second, the ethical consequence of Tillich's system, especially self-affirmation which he terms the courage-to-be; third, the autonomy of reason.

VII.5. (a) Substance and Being-itself.

Tillich's concept of "God" has been dealt with already in Chapter VI. Suffice it to say here that Tillich's notion of God is not identical with that which prevails in traditional theistic Christianity. God, for Tillich, is not a supranatural immaterial spirit,¹²⁰ somehow located "above," "beyond," or "in heaven." God is not a being, not a thing, not an object, since whenever infinite or unconditional power and meaning is attributed to the highest being, it has ceased to be a being and has become being-itself.¹²¹

Since Tillich regards "God" as a theological concept about whom we can only speak symbolically, and since "being-itself" is a philosophical concept about which we may speak properly and directly, we will for present purposes, consider mainly the philosophical strand

¹²⁰ Cf. John 4:24 and II Corinthians 3:17. Tillich gives his "unqualified approval of the symbol "spirit." "God is spirit. This is the most embracing, direct and unrestricted symbol for the divine life. The influence of German idealism, for which "spirit" was the ultimate reality, shows itself here as well as elsewhere in Tillich's thought." (G.F. Thomas, Philosophy and Religious Belief (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), p. 208. See also S.T., I., p. 249, and for the influence of German idealism see Volume III of his Systematic Theology.

¹²¹ S.T., I., p. 235.

of Tillich's philosophical theology. But we must bear in mind the very close relation of theology to philosophy which Tillich asserts, and especially the most important single statement which he posits, namely, "God is Being-itself."

"Being-itself" has many synonyms in the thought of Paul Tillich: "the power of being," "the meaning of being," "ultimate reality," man's "ultimate concern." So Being-itself infinitely transcends every finite being. There is no proportion or gradation between the finite and the infinite. There is an absolute break, an infinite jump. On the other hand, everything finite participates in being-itself and in its infinity.¹²² It will be immediately recognized that in the Spinozistic system, there is no mention of an "absolute break" or an "infinite jump." However, it is significant to note that for Tillich, despite the infinite jump, everything finite participates in being-itself and in its infinity. And it is because of this participation, and only because of this participation that finite beings have any power of being at all, in fact any being at all. "The power of being transcends every being that participates in it," yet the "power of being is the power of everything that is, in so far as it is."¹²³ The way of philosophical approach to the philosophical ultimate, being-itself or esse ipsum, pushes language to its very limit. But even so, it is a necessary concept in every philosophy. The concept of being as being (being-itself) is the power inherent in everything, the power of resisting non-being. So it seems that this

¹²²S.T., I., p. 237.

¹²³S.T., I., p. 231.

God (Being-itself) is completely immanent, and so it must be the creative ground of the structure of the world and all that is in it.

"God is immanent in the world as its permanent ground."¹²⁴ "He is the creative ground, here and now, always and everywhere."¹²⁵

Since God is neither alongside finite beings, nor yet above them, but "nearer to them than they are to themselves," it is very difficult to understand what Tillich has in mind by the "absolute break" between God and his creatures, since the Being of being is nearer to them than they are to themselves. However, for Tillich, the finite is posited within the process of the divine life. But the divine life is infinite, and this may be explained by saying that the divine life is infinite in contrast with, or compared with the finitude of man and his world. God is infinite because he has the finite within himself united with his infinity.¹²⁶ So God is immanent in the world as its permanent ground.¹²⁷

At this point, I would like to suggest that the descriptions which Tillich gives of Being-itself (or God) seem very close to the philosophical notions of Spinoza's Substance. This is not to suggest that there are not points of difference. But the similar concepts conjured up in the mind by their use of these two terms ("Substance" and "Being-itself") pointing to the same intended Reference as that intended for "God," despite the shift in Sense make this similarity

¹²⁴ S.T., I., p. 263.

¹²⁵ S.T., II., p. 7.

¹²⁶ S.T., I., pp. 251-252.

¹²⁷ S.T., I., p. 263.

worthy of reflection.

Speaking about Spinoza's ideas Tillich states that "universal substance... is based on the immediate experiences of something ultimate in value and being of which we can become intuitively aware."¹²⁸ Spinoza's notion of God or Substance is "ultimate being," that is, he is self-subsistent and self-sustaining, (ens causa sui) unconditional independent being, a description which would eminently fit Tillich's Being-itself.¹²⁹ God is free because he has "aseity," he is a se, self-derived. There is nothing prior to his being which could, in any way, condition him.¹³⁰ Tillich maintains that creation has no purposes beyond itself. It should not be thought of as serving the purpose of God's glory (as in Calvinism) or as providing an object for the divine love (as in Lutheranism.) Such concepts imply a lack in God, which creation is supposed to fill. Instead of this, one should speak of the telos of creation, which is the striving of every creature towards its own fulfilment. Such directing creativity Tillich calls "providence."¹³¹ And it seems to me that these points would not be objected to by Spinoza.

The various statements which Tillich makes about Spinoza's Substance seem to me to be very highly suggestive. Tillich, without equivocation, states that Substance "is the name of the ultimate power

¹²⁸ S.T., I., p. 9.

¹²⁹ S.T., I., p. 236.

¹³⁰ S.T., I., pp. 196, 236 and 248.

¹³¹ S.T., I., pp. 263-264.

of being,"¹³² which is, of course, the designation of Being-itself. Though the idea of "something static" is often applied to Spinoza's Substance, Tillich implies that this is not a correct description. Again, Tillich, speaking of Spinoza's phrase, deus sive natura, says that this phrase "does not say that God is identical with nature, but that he is identical with the natura naturans, the creative nature, the creative ground of all natural objects."¹³³ And Tillich asserts of Being-itself that "the ground of being means the creative source of everything that has being"¹³⁴ which seems to be what "Substance" means also for Spinoza.

We have already mentioned that God for Tillich is an immanent God, but that he also speaks of his transcendence. God is transcendent if we consider the finitude of all beings. God's transcendence is attested by Spinoza by his infinitely many Attributes, by the transcending of all purposes in a more powerful principle which is necessary and free from purposes; by the infinity of the never known totality of natural laws; by the fact that man is not the centre, but only a mode in the world.

It seems, then, that there is what might be termed a "dangerously" close relation between Spinoza's Substance (deus sive natura) and Tillich's Being-itself. By "dangerously" I mean that the similarities between Spinoza's Substance and Tillich's Being-itself put a great strain on Tillich's desire to dissociate himself from both

¹³² C.B., p. 180.

¹³³ S.T., II., p. 6.

¹³⁴ T.P.T., p. 341.

Spinoza and his form of naturalism. It would appear that though the Sense of each of these two expression will differ, the intended Reference could be considered as one and the same.

VII.5. (b) Self-Affirmation, Courage, and Conatus.

In his essay specifically dealing with courage, Tillich chose the title with considerable care. He did this in order to bring out the two meanings of "courage," one ethical and the other ontological. Courage, he says, "as a human act, as a matter of valuation, is an ethical concept." On the other hand, "courage as the universal and essential self-affirmation of one's being is an ontological act."¹³⁵ For Spinoza, courage is an expression of the essential act of everything that participates in being, and this could be called self-affirmation. "The endeavour," Spinoza writes, "wherewith everything endeavours to persist in its own being, is nothing else but the actual essence of the thing in question."¹³⁶ This striving, this endeavour is not a contingent aspect of a thing, it is "the actual essence of the thing in question." The essence of a thing is such that "being given, the thing is necessarily given also; and which being removed, the thing is necessarily removed also."¹³⁷ In other words, the conatus makes the thing what it is; if it vanishes, the thing dissolves away. For Spinoza, then, this striving or endeavour towards

¹³⁵ C.B., p. 3.

¹³⁶ E., III., prop. 7. For Spinoza's words, I am now using Improvement of the Understanding Ethics and Correspondence, trans. R.H.M. Elwes, Universal Classics Library, (London: M.W. Dunne, 1901).

¹³⁷ E., II., df. 2.

self-preservation or towards self-affirmation, equivalent to the essence of a thing, is the power (potency-to-act) of the mind.¹³⁸ This identification of the striving, the essence of a thing, and the potency to act which Spinoza asserts, finds its equivalent in Tillich in the power of being, for without this power of being, the "thing is necessarily removed also."

Virtue, for Spinoza, is the striving to preserve being. And this is the most important goal in any man's life: the more he strives, the more virtue he has.¹³⁹ Virtue then is human power and is equivalent to his natural essence or to his nature.¹⁴⁰ This striving to preserve one's being is the most vital of all the potencies-to-act, and nothing can be prior to it,¹⁴¹ since the effort for self-preservation is the essence of the thing. In relation to virtue, Spinoza uses the term Strength of Character (fortitudo), which is divided into Courage and High-Mindedness.

By Courage I mean the desire whereby every man strives to preserve his own being in accordance with the dictates of reason. By High-Mindedness I mean, the desire whereby every man endeavours, solely under the dictates of reason, to aid other men and to unite them to himself in friendship.¹⁴²

It might seem that Spinoza, in speaking of self-preservation is implying that man by his own efforts, by the dictates of reason,

¹³⁸ E., III., 54. "The endeavour or power of the mind is the actual essence thereof."

¹³⁹ E., IV., prop. 20.

¹⁴⁰ E., IV., df 8. See also E., III., prop. 7.

¹⁴¹ E., IV., prop. 22. "No virtue can be conceived as prior to the endeavour to preserve one's own being."

¹⁴² E., III., prop. 59.

is able to prevent a fall into meaninglessness or death. But this would be a mistaken idea since he asserts that self-affirmation can only be effected by participation in the divine.¹⁴³ Participation in God is described by Spinoza in terms of knowledge and love. The mind, in so far as it knows itself under the form of eternity, has to that extent "knowledge of God; it (the mind) knows that it is in God, and is concerned through God."¹⁴⁴ This knowledge causes love, intellectual love. "No love save intellectual love is eternal."¹⁴⁵ "The intellectual love of the mind towards God is part of the infinite love wherewith God loves himself,"¹⁴⁶ and by participation, "the love of God to man and the mind's intellectual love towards God are identical."¹⁴⁷ Consequently we might say that only the imperfect can love the perfect, and the perfect one (God) only himself. In this Spinoza recalls the old Platonic axiom of love; but in a profound adaptation of medieval mysticism, which also spoke of amare Deum in Deo (to love God in God) Spinoza associates this idea (the Platonic concept) with his own idea that human love for God is only a part, a function, of the infinite spiritual love through which God blissfully reaffirms his being and essence throughout eternity.

In what has been said we can readily see the close connection

¹⁴³E., IV., proof 4. "The power, whereby each particular thing, and consequently man, preserves his being, is the power of God or of Nature."

¹⁴⁴E., V., prop. 30.

¹⁴⁵E., V., 34 Corol.

¹⁴⁶E., V., prop. 36.

¹⁴⁷E., V., 36 Corol.

between some of Spinoza's doctrines and certain of Tillich's tenets on both self-affirmation and participation and also finally on love. Courage, for Tillich, "is the self-affirmation of being in spite of the fact of non-being."¹⁴⁸ This courage, like that conatus mentioned by Spinoza, is rooted in a power of being infinitely greater than the power of being of the self, and, as with Spinoza, can only be accepted by participation in the divine power of Being-itself. Tillich's "courage to be" can only have as its source of power of being-itself. Tillich distinguishes between the courage which, through participation, is based on a mystical union with the ground of being (which he sees in Spinoza's system) and the courage to be based on the personal encounter with God or being-itself as the ground of being. But the distinction which Tillich is making between Spinoza's mystical background of such a union and his own views seem to be invalidated when it is asserted that mysticism, "is an element of every form of relation" to the ground of being.¹⁴⁹ This is corroborated by his statement that "in this point mystical experience and personal encounter are identical."¹⁵⁰

Conatus, for Spinoza, may be regarded as that which concerns every man ultimately. Man is ultimately concerned to preserve his own being through the power of being-itself or through God or Nature.

¹⁴⁸ C.B., p. 155.

¹⁴⁹ C.B., p. 160.

¹⁵⁰ C.B., p. 173. See also, S.T., I., pp. 9, 172, and 213; S.T., III., pp. 92, 242 and 351. "Mystical experience, or experience of participation, is the real problem of experiential theology." S.T., I., p. 44.

Enough has been said about Tillich's ultimate concern to be able to note the close connection between it and the "endeavour" or Spinoza.

Turning to the third feature of man which we mentioned, namely love, we have seen that Spinoza distinguishes between emotional love and intellectual love. Tillich makes the same distinction, and it is worth quoting from Tillich:

If this were so, love could be kept within the sphere of affections, and it could be discussed as one affection among others - as it was, for instance, by Spinoza. But it is significant that Spinoza, when he comes to his final statements about the nature of the divine substance and about the many ways in which man participates in it, speaks of man's intellectual love towards God as the love with which God loves himself. In other words, he elevates love out of the emotional into the ontological realm.¹⁵¹

We have to suggest that Tillich's views on ontological (intellectual) love are similar to those of Spinoza. But further, Tillich considers that "love cannot be described as the union of the strange but the reunion of the estranged."¹⁵² Concerning naturalism, Tillich notes that there is a tendency on the part of the naturalist to reduce all the qualities of love to those of epithymia (or crude animal desire) and that only in the light of ontological love could a solution to this problem be found.¹⁵³

VII.5 (c) Knowledge and Reason.

If we try to consider fully the question of the relation of Reason and Knowledge in Spinoza and Tillich, we should need the space

¹⁵¹ L.P.J., pp. 3-4.

¹⁵² L.P.J., p. 25.

¹⁵³ L.P.J., p. 28.

of a whole book since it (the relation of reason to knowledge) constitutes one of the most important elements in both Tillich and Spinoza. Spinoza, in his analysis of Substance, asserts that of the infinite number of attributes only two, namely, Thought and Extension, are known to the human intellect. Descartes had conceived it as divided into the two causally independent ingredients of Thought and Extension. Spinoza's theory of the mind, rigorously deduced from the concept of nature as an indivisible whole, is developed in almost exact antithesis of Descartes'. For Spinoza the "human mind is part of the infinite intellect of God."¹⁵⁴

In his analysis of knowledge, Spinoza in his Ethics distinguishes three levels. The first and lowest level of knowledge is knowledge partially derived from sense perception since sense perception can provide us with neither complete nor coherent knowledge. This type of knowledge is called in the Platonic tradition "opinion" but Spinoza thinks of imagination, hearsay, illusion and hallucination. On the second level, reason is used to obtain adequate ideas, that is to say, ideas which through right reasoning, cohere with other adequate ideas. On the third level, intuitive knowledge reveals an absolutely true and adequate idea of the single comprehensive system reflecting the Universe as a whole. The intuition is not sensory intuition in space and time, and it is not psyche, emotional experience. Intuition is a conception of reason, not a perception of sensation, involving immediate and self-evident certainty.

The superior status of intellectual intuition has a direct

¹⁵⁴E., II., prop. XI corol.

bearing on Spinoza's theory of virtue. He demonstrates¹⁵⁵ that "the highest endeavour of the mind and the highest virtue is to understand things by the third kind of knowledge." The value of the understanding seems to conceive adequate ideas or common notions produced by the second kind, but the highest virtue of the mind is to conceive ideas intuitively and sub specie aeternitatis in relation to the divine attributes, since the "mind's highest good is the knowledge of God, and the mind's highest virtue is to know God."¹⁵⁶ So the highest virtue of the mind depends on (a) the intuitive function of the intellect and (b) the infinite perfection of the object which it conceives. This implies that Spinoza introduces an extrinsic criterion of human perfection, namely the perfection of God.

The concept of perfection is quite a fascinating one. Aquinas writes that "everything is perfect in so far as it is actual,"¹⁵⁷ and Spinoza re-iterates this when he says that "by perfection... I shall mean... reality."¹⁵⁸ The language, and metaphysical presumptions, are Aristotelian. For Aristotle, what actually is must be better than what merely can be; in other words, the merely potential is incomplete, formless, imperfect. The actual is "perfect," then, in so far as it is the realization of, or the giving form to, a potentiality.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ E., V., prop. 25. See also C.B., p. 83.

¹⁵⁶ E., IV., prop. 28.

¹⁵⁷ Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Pt. I, q. 5, a.1.

¹⁵⁸ E., IV., Preface in the trans. by A. Boyle, (London: Everyman's Library 1910, reprinted 1948), p. 144.

¹⁵⁹ Aristotle, Metaphysics, 1049b - 1051 a.

Spinoza has argued that the appeal to ideals is always arbitrary. We arbitrarily set up ideals and then speak of things as perfect or imperfect in relation to these arbitrary notions of ours. In other words, ideals by their very nature are relative.

Tillich and Spinoza seem to share similar views on this topic. For Tillich (and for Spinoza) "God alone is 'perfect,' a word which is exactly defined as being beyond the gap between essential and existential."¹⁶⁰ But Tillich warns us that we must not confuse the "highest" with the "most perfect." Perfection, for Tillich, is "the actualization of one's potentialities" but perfection is approached though never reached.¹⁶¹

Tillich distinguishes between an ontological and a technical reason. Ontological reason is the "structure of the mind which enables the mind to shape and grasp reality."¹⁶² But this concept of reason may or may not be accompanied by technical reason. Technical reason more or less corresponds to the type of reasoning in scientific naturalism, and in Spinoza's second level reasoning. When technical reasoning corresponds with the second level, it can give us adequate ideas in which the form of verification does play a part. The highest level in Spinoza's hierarchy of knowledge seems to correspond with what Tillich terms the deeper levels of reality which are opened up by the use of symbols, both religious and secular.

Though Spinoza gives four kinds of knowledge in his Improvement

¹⁶⁰ S.T., II., p. 23.

¹⁶¹ S.T., III., pp. 230, 239 and 241.

¹⁶² S.T., I., p. 172.

of the Understanding and three kinds in his Ethics, it would seem that we may reduce his number still further to two closely related kinds of knowledge. The first of these we might designate an immediate knowledge of God by the intellect, and the second a mediated knowledge of God through all the different modes making up the attribute of Thought. The first type then would be in some ways equivalent to Tillich's depth of reason and to revelation since "reason does not resist revelation - it asks for revelation, for revelation means the reintegration of reason."¹⁶³ The second type would then be that reason which is commonly held to occur in the finite world.

It might be thought that, for Spinoza, revelation would be unacceptable. However, though it may seem to be the position in his philosophical writings, he does say, viewing the historical reality of faith and its importance for life in society that he evaluated "Holy Writ or revelation very highly from the standpoint of its ability and necessity."¹⁶⁴ Tillich considers that theology must not be subservient to reason nor reason to theology: each has its own realm, in which the other should not contradict it.¹⁶⁵ But if we accept faith blindly without reason, we should be acting foolishly and without judgment.¹⁶⁶ Spinoza considers that reason is the realm of truth and

¹⁶³ S.T., I., p. 94. The word "knowledge" is being in its broad sense: e.g. knowledge of revelation does not increase our knowledge about the structure of nature, history or man. See S.T., I., p. 129.

¹⁶⁴ See Karl Jaspers, The Great Philosophers (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1966), p. 348.

¹⁶⁵ S.T., I., pp. 24-26.

¹⁶⁶ D.F., p. 31.

wisdom and theology that of piety and obedience. Tillich would say that "the denial of reason in the classical sense is anti-human because it is anti-divine."¹⁶⁷

In this section we have seen that Tillich's philosophical theology displays considerable similarities to Spinoza's philosophical system, especially in the fields of Being-itself and Substance, in ethical fields and in epistemological spheres. But Spinoza's system has always been regarded as a pantheistic system and in the next section we intend to examine whether Tillich shows any pantheistic leanings.

VII.6. Tillich and Pantheism.

Although Spinoza has been called an atheist because of his uncompromising rejection of theism as understood by orthodox theologians, he has had a profound influence of many religious thinkers. For example, Schleiermacher asks his readers to "offer with me reverently a tribute to the names of the holy, rejected Spinoza,"¹⁶⁸ and he expresses the spirit of Spinoza's pantheism when he writes:

The contemplation of the pious is the immediate consciousness of the universal existence of all finite things in and through the Infinite, and of all temporal things in and through the Eternal. Religion is to seek this and find it in all that lives and moves, in all growth and change, in all doing and suffering. It is to have life and to know life in immediate feeling, only as such an existence in the Infinite and Eternal.... Wherefore it is a life in the infinite nature of the Whole, in the One and in the All, in God, having and possessing all things in God, and God in all.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ S.T., I., p. 72.

¹⁶⁸ Friedrich Schleiermacher, On Religion (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 40.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 36.

But how are we to define pantheism? This is a problem into which we must look. The pantheistic theologian views God as immanent in all things and seeks to experience Him in everything. But we must not accept the immanence of God as a demonstration or proof that this leads to pantheism. The belief in the immanence of God was accepted by Augustine. The pantheist regards himself and every other finite thing as only a manifestation of the Absolute.¹⁷⁰

Pantheism is the theory which regards all finite things as merely aspects, modifications or parts of one eternal and self-existent being; which views all material objects and all particular minds as necessarily derived from a single infinite substance. The one absolute substance - the one all-comprehending being - it calls God. Thus God, according to it, is all that there is; and nothing is which is not essentially included in, or which has not been necessarily evolved out of, God.... In order that there may be pantheism, monism and determinism must be combined.¹⁷¹

The philosophical impulse behind pantheism is the drive of reason for unity in its view of the world. The multiplicity and diversity of phenomena challenge reason to relate them to each other in a comprehensive system based upon a single principle of unity.

The essential idea is that God and the world are not related like cause and effect, creator and creature, but that they are identical in substance. The principal difference between pantheistic theories lies in the direction in which the identification, "God and the

¹⁷⁰ It was for this reason that Plotinus' conception of the world has been regarded as a form of pantheism, since it explains the many as products of emanations by necessity from the One and represents them as continuing to be oriented towards it as centre. See Frederick Copleston, History of Philosophy (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1956), Vol. I., p. 467.

¹⁷¹ Robert Flint, Anti-theistic Theories (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1889), p. 336.

World are one," is undertaken. If it is postulated that the world is not an entity independent of God but only an aspect then we may call this type "acosmic pantheism." But if the world is less identified with God than God with the world, that is, if God is a kind of secondary entity, then the type becomes "atheistic pantheism." Spinoza's pantheism appears to be closer to acosmic pantheism since he maintained only one (res infinita) of the three kinds of substances postulated by Descartes: res infinita, (God), res cogitantes (souls) and res extensae (bodies). The last two were reduced by Spinoza to the Attributes, "Thought" and "Extension." Thus only God remained.

Tillich pleads that since the word "pantheistic" is a "heresy label" of the worst kind, it should be defined very carefully before it is applied "aggressively." "Pantheism does not mean," Tillich writes, "never has meant, and never should mean, that everything that is, is God."¹⁷² In his own significant analytical way, Tillich writes of pantheism while having Spinoza in mind.

If God is identified with nature (deus sive natura), it is not with the totality of natural objects which is called God but rather the creative power and unity of nature, the absolute substance which is present in everything.... Pantheism is the doctrine that God is the substance or essence of all things, not the meaningless assertion that God is the totality of things. The pantheistic element in the classical doctrine that God is ipsum esse, being-itself, is as necessary for the Christian as the mystical element of the divine presence.¹⁷³

Tillich has made two significant points in this quotation. First, it is meaningless to identify God with the totality of things. Tillich

¹⁷² S.T., I., p. 233.

¹⁷³ S.T., I., pp. 233-234; see also S.T., I., p. 236.

deplores the suggestion that God should be thought of as a useful "laundry list" summary title for the totality of things conceived as a senseless inert lump or lumps. Second, Tillich wants to assert that if pantheism is properly understood, then it has a genuine contribution to make.¹⁷⁴

Is, then, Tillich's philosophical theology in which God (Being-itself) is the power of being by which all things have their being, a form of pantheism? The charge has been made that he so dilutes the divine transcendence that he falls into a pantheistic position, perhaps because he drives away any type of personal God.¹⁷⁵ Marvin Fox states:

Tillich asserts that "since God is the ground of being, he is the ground of the structure of being... the structure is grounded in him" (S.T., I., p. 238). In this statement God appears to be so closely linked with the Universe that we might wonder if Tillich's God is not the God of pantheism.¹⁷⁶

A number of others, for example, G. Weigel and G.F. McLean, have also accused Tillich of pantheism.

Tillich rejects the idea that he is a pantheist. As the ground of being God is more than the unity and totality of all beings which make up the universe. But if God is identified with the reality of the Universe, then his system might be a monistic system closely allied to

¹⁷⁴George F. McLean, Tillich in Catholic Thought, op. cit., p. 82, writes: He had been right in appreciating the necessity of participation, but wrong in attempting to realize it by "an element of pantheism."

¹⁷⁵R. Killen, The Ontological Theology of Paul Tillich (J.H. Kok, N.V. Kampen, 1956), pp. 241-245 and 253-257.

¹⁷⁶Marvin Fox, "Tillich's Ontology and God," Anglican Theological Review, XLIII (1961) 266. Cf. G. Weigel and G.F. McLean, Paul Tillich in Catholic Thought, op. cit., pp. 18, 74, 77, 779f, 82f, 155 and 191.

pantheism. However, Tillich does see a possible ambiguity here and says, "I must first concede that the structure of being, although rooted in being-as-such, is certainly not identical with it, and should perhaps have been more sharply distinguished from it."¹⁷⁷

Tillich does, however, insist that God is not only the ground of being but also the abyss of being which infinitely surpasses finite beings,¹⁷⁸ and hence God cannot be identified with finite things or the Universe. If we concede that this statement of Tillich's does argue that God cannot be identified with finite beings, we may ask if they (finite beings) are identified with or in Him? This raises a very big question, namely, the freedom of finite beings, their deliberation, their decision and their responsibility.¹⁷⁹ Tillich answers this by pointing out that man has the power (or freedom) to contradict even the ground of being itself.¹⁸⁰ Tillich also appeals to the validity of the "Infra Lutheranum" principle: that the finite is capable of the infinite, over against the Reformed Church's "Extra Calvinisticum" which asserts that the finite is not capable of the infinite. Although the Reformed Church views the "Infra Lutheranum" principle as something suspect precisely because it veers towards pantheism, Tillich believes that it can be explained in a non-pantheistic way.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁷ T.P.T., p. 335.

¹⁷⁸ S.T., I., p. 238: "In this term (the creative and abysmal ground of being) naturalistic pantheism, based on the category of substance, and rational theism, based on the category of causality, are overcome."

¹⁷⁹ S.T., I., p. 184.

¹⁸⁰ S.T., I., p. 182: "Man is man because he has freedom."

¹⁸¹ T.P.T., p. 5.

Tillich's statement that God is beyond potentiality and actuality, beyond essence and existence, a statement the meaning of which is very difficult to understand, cannot be construed as a pantheism of immanence. Now, if Tillich's God were a completely immanent God, then, I think, the danger of falling into pantheism would have been very much greater. But Tillich's God is not wholly immanent.

Hamilton, in his very penetrating attack on Tillich's monism and pantheism asks, "if pantheism and Tillich's system do not hold that God is in just the same way, precisely how do they differ?"¹⁸² Hamilton considers that no clear answer can be given to this question since the difference lies principally in Tillich's use of the word "ground," the meaning of which it is difficult to determine precisely. In fact, he continues, Tillich has stated that the word "ground" is symbolic, so, "by definition, the word is incapable of conveying any direct and proper meaning."

Kierkegaard maintained that any system whatsoever and the belief in the existing individual are totally incompatible. Any "existential system" is impossible.¹⁸³ Any attempt to understand being as a whole must result in the deification of the concept of totality, and some form of pantheistic thinking seems inevitable. As Kierkegaard says:

So-called pantheistic systems have often been characterized and challenged in the assertion that they abrogate the

¹⁸² Kenneth Hamilton, The System and the Gospel (London: S.C.M. Press, 1963), pp. 85-86.

¹⁸³ Soren Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript trans. David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 99.

distinction between good and evil, and destroy freedom. Perhaps one would express oneself quite as definitely, if one said that every such system fantastically dissipates the concept existence. But we ought to say this not merely of pantheistic systems; it would be more to the point to show that every system must be pantheistic precisely on account of its finality. Existence must be revoked in the eternal before the system can round itself out; there must be no existing remainder....¹⁸⁴

Behind speculative philosophy's wish to bring existence under the ground of being, it would seem that we are trying to replace the Christian faith by some other outlook and in Tillich's case, pantheism "seems to be the only consistent position outside Christianity,"¹⁸⁵ since one takes oneself out of his own existence into the "bosom" of the eternal. No theological system can avoid making theological claims whether it wishes to do so or not. But the system must make room for the freedom of all creation and since any monistic naturalism or pantheism is, in a sense, deterministic, the question of whether man is free or not becomes important. We have indicated Tillich's reply on this question. He asserts that man is free since he is able to contradict even the ground of being itself. But since the idea of "ground," in a sense, is very unclear, we cannot have a very clear idea of what it means to be said to contradict it. If we do not have freedom then any religious system tends to be pantheistic.

But anyone offering this type of criticism put forward by Hamilton, misunderstands, it seems to me, the limits of any ontological system. Tillich's system is a system and as such it must present a coherent structure. Hamilton, it seems to me, is a very severe

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 111.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 203.

critic of the system and tends to blame too much on the fact that Tillich's is a system. Kierkegaard did not like systems either. Now any theological system must present theological truths, and it is not difficult to detect those which fit coherently into the system and those which do not. Hence if we are going to attack any system as being pantheistic, we must not extract from the system certain statements and then view these out of context. The problem of pantheism arises when the structure of the system, deduced from the laws of reason, is imposed upon the notion of "God" who then becomes a necessity of thought since the whole of the ontological structure is imposed on God. Tillich never does this; the structure is not imposed on God so long as he is the structure. I am not concerned to elucidate what "he is the structure" means but it does not mean that the structure is imposed on God. Tillich's whole ontological method and the ontological structure which it creates, all seem to me to cohere with any theological assertion which is made. There is a correlation and coherence throughout. The Christian revelation (and some other key traditional notions) are not interpreted in an orthodox manner but this is not pantheism.

It seems to me that we may say that Tillich's philosophical theology leans towards pantheism since he himself has admitted that pantheism or at least pantheistic elements are as necessary for the Christian doctrine as the mystical element of the divine presence. However, Tillich certainly wishes to distinguish his system from obviously pantheistic systems but his way of differentiation is by means of language which is somewhat obscure so that we are unable to state whether he has succeeded in convincing us or not.

VII.7. Tillich, Monism and Monistic Language.

The philosophy of naturalism, whether it be of the spiritual or idealistic variety or of the materialistic or mechanistic variety, always exhibits a monistic tendency. In the philosophical theology of Tillich, it would seem that it is possible to regard the ultimate monistic principle as the Ground of Being or Being-itself in which all existent things participate. Ontologically, I suppose, all being (the many) owes its existence to the power of some unitary principle, be it the One of Plotinus, the Good of Plato, or the Substance of Spinoza.

One of the obstacles to monism in Tillich's system may be subsumed under the dichotomous headings of "self-world" or "subject-object." For Tillich, the basic structure is the implicit condition of the ontological question which presupposes an asking subject and an object about which the question is asked. This further presupposes the subject-object structure of being, which in turn, presupposes the self-world structure as the basic articulation of being and meaning. Thus, on account of a basic presupposition about what there is, Tillich is to some extent committed to a dualistic type of naturalism. For him, the split between subject and object is the precondition of all knowledge, and the history of epistemology is a cognitive attempt to bridge this gap showing the possible unity of subject and object. This attempt, says Tillich, takes one of two forms: (a) the annihilation of one side for the sake of the other, or (b) the establishment of a uniting principle which contains both. Though these statements are (at least implicitly) similar to statements that he may have read made by Russell or Quine (and possibly others) on the subject of monistic

language,¹⁸⁶ Tillich seems to have rejected the efforts (following both Russell and Quine) of making progress in direction (a) since "the reality of the split, of course, cannot be avoided: every act of cognitive existence is determined by it."¹⁸⁷ However, Tillich seems to leave us in no doubt that he shares the modern concern to proceed to a point of identity at which the subject-object dichotomy is eliminated.¹⁸⁸ To equate reality with objective being is as unfortunate as to relate it with subjective being. Consequently reality must be beyond the dichotomy identifying itself with both.

It will be recalled that Tillich speaks of subjective or

¹⁸⁶ Both Russell and Quine abandoned their attempts in constructing a language for a monistic ontology. Russell, My Philosophical Development (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1959), p. 56, writes: "The axiom of internal relations in either form involves as Mr. Bradley has just urged (Cf. Appearance and Reality 2nd Edition p. 519: Reality is one. It must be single because plurality taken as real, contradicts itself. Plurality implies relations, and through its relations it unwillingly asserts always a superior unity), the conclusion that there are no relations and that there are not many things, but only one thing." In his essay "Logical Atomism" in 1924, Russell argues against Bradley's monistic dispensation with relations, an argument he (Russell) considered decisive. See B. Russell "Logical Atomism" in Logic and Knowledge (London: Allen and Unwin, 1956), p. 335. W.V.O. Quine, abandoning "It Pegasizes," says "Each of us learns his language from other people... linguistically and hence conceptually the things in sharpest focus are the things that are public enough to be talked of publicly... (physical objects). Word and Object (New York: Wiley, 1960), p. 1. Though, according to Russell, relations like "A precedes B" and "A is on the left of B" or "A is part of B" cannot be translated into a monistic form of language, King-Farlow suggests the following transformations: "It is shown A-ly first, and B-ly second" and "Whence It B's, It lefts A-ly" and "Within-where It A's, therewithin It B's."

¹⁸⁷ S.T., III., p. 70.

¹⁸⁸ The point of procedure in every analysis and every concept of a system of reality must be the point where subject and object are at one and the same place. I.H. p. 60. It aims to cut under the subject-object distinction and to reach the stratum of Being which Jaspers, for instance, called the Ursprung or Source. T.C., p. 92.

ontological reason and objective reason. Ontological reason is the structure of the mind which enables it to grasp and shape objective reason, which is defined as the rational structure of reality. If the objective reason is the creation of the subjective reason, we have idealism. If these two reasons are regarded as quite independent, we have dualistic or pluralistic metaphysics or epistemology, while monism refers to the identity of the two reasons in terms of being or in terms of experience.

In philosophical language, the form, the meaning and structure element of the divine life is called "Logos."¹⁸⁹ In the analysis of the knowing subject, or self, the logos is subjective reason and makes of the self a structured centre. The known object, the world, the logos becomes objective reason and the world a structured whole. There is nothing beyond the logos structure of being.¹⁹⁰

It is possible to conceive the relation between the rational structures in a number of ways. Tillich lists realism, idealism, dualism or pluralism, and monism. The monistic type "affirms the underlying identity which expresses the rational structure of reality,"¹⁹¹ but no explanation of the difference between subjective and objective reason is offered. Why should there be a correspondence between the logos of subjective reason and the logos of reality as a whole? The reason for this is given by positing that that which "mediates between the silent mystery of the abyss of being and the fullness of concrete, individualized, self-related beings" is the Logos, the medium of

¹⁸⁹ S.T., I., p. 156.

¹⁹⁰ S.T., I., pp. 171, 172 and 279.

¹⁹¹ S.T., I., p. 76.

creation, the Ground of being. The manifestation of the Ground of being is thus spiritual and not, as in the case of Spinoza, "mechanical."¹⁹²

Reason, in both its objective and subjective forms points to something which transcends them in both power and meaning, and hence Logos becomes the point of identity between God, self and world. Of these, the self-world participate in Being-itself, from which they have their being. Thus God participates in beings as their power of being, the Substance which appears in the rational structure, the "creative ground" of every rational creature or creation or the "abyss" which cannot be exhausted by any totality, or the infinite potentiality of being and meaning" which pours into the rational structure of mind and reality, actualizing and transforming them."¹⁹³ God is the ground of truth as well as of being.

The experience of ultimacy implies one and one only ultimate of being and meaning which concerns man unconditionally because it determines his very being and meaning. From the philosophical point of view, this ultimate is being-itself, esse ipsum, that beyond which thought cannot go, the power of being in which everything participates. In Monistic Naturalism, Deus sive natura is the expression of the all-pervading presence of the divine. But Tillich contends that the numinous character of this universalistic concept of God has been replaced by the secular character of the monistic idea of nature. This may or may not be so, but it seems that Tillich's conception of

¹⁹² S.T., I., p. 158.

¹⁹³ S.T., I., p. 79.

being-itself is monistic, since "the power of being is the power of everything that is, in so far as it is."¹⁹⁴

But we may ask, Is it possible to "transcend" the human conditioning of reality in this subject-object way? In other words, is there another way of viewing reality other than the usual way of subject and object? This will involve the question of language, and how it is or may be used.¹⁹⁵ As we have previously stated, the gap between subject and object may be eliminated by the annihilation of one side for the sake of the other. But which side is it possible to eliminate, if this is possible at all?

When Tillich speaks of the ontological structure of the self-world, it seems to me that he has a double usage of "self" in this polarity. It is not always clear in Tillich's own exposition in which sense he is using this word. On the one hand, "self" means what Tillich calls "self-relatedness," the immediately experienced "I" in such acts as "I am" and "I think." Of this meaning he writes:

The question is not whether selves exist. The question is whether we are aware of self-relatedness. And this awareness can only be denied in a statement in which self-relatedness is implicitly confirmed.¹⁹⁶

That is, the act of making the denial refutes the content of the denial.

¹⁹⁴ S.T., I., p. 231.

¹⁹⁵ As John Wisdom has said "An account of the world in terms of things, an account of the world in terms of facts, and an account of the world in terms of events is just an account of one world in three languages." John Wisdom "Logical Construction" Part II, Mind XL (1931) 460. Stuart Hampshire states that "The world is always open to rearrangement." S. Hampshire, Thought and Action (London: Chatto and Windus, 1959), p. 40.

¹⁹⁶ S.T., I., p. 169.

On the other hand, "self" refers to a kind of being, namely, a self-reflective being, or any man, a "structure of centeredness." In this sense "self" conveys that kind of being in which all the ontological dimensions are actualized. Though Tillich seems to recognize these two shades of meaning, he makes no systematic use of the distinction. Tillich's whole discourse on the subject-object dichotomy, the self-world as his basic ontological structure, his two different forms of reason, the experiencing "I" and that which is experienced, combine to indicate that Tillich is definitely bound to a pluralistic universe and so it appears that his monistic leanings are quite limited. But this does not affect his naturalistic leanings.

Tillich is supported in his view by S. Hampshire:

The first person singular is the nucleus on which all the other referential devices depend... The final point of reference, by which a statement is attached to reality, is the speaker's reference to himself, as one thing and one person among others....¹⁹⁷

The distinction between the self and world (Tillich) and persons and objects (e.g. P.F. Strawson) is a familiar one, and many philosophers, past and present, have found it to be inescapable. The dualisms of particular and universal, reality and sense-data, have been questioned by many dualists as well as monists. But it has been exceptionally difficult to reject the fact that there is an "I" which is quite distinct from that which the "I" experiences. Hume, with his theory of a bundle of perceptions made a serious attempt to eliminate the "I" in favour of causally related perceptions. However, Hume

¹⁹⁶ S.T., I., p. 169.

¹⁹⁷ S. Hampshire, op. cit., p. 87.

himself recognized that it was not satisfactory.¹⁹⁸ Experiences by themselves are insufficient to give the identity of their owner.

King-Farlow¹⁹⁹ has taken up the challenge and has tried to dispel current dogmatism about what is involved in human experiences (which some construe as an experience of the "I") so that we can begin to focus on the way we have been conditioned to use our language. The recurring "grid" appears to be the subject-object dichotomy. Faith in this "grid" leads one to conclude that if an individual is having an experience of something, then there must (a) be many individuals and must (b) be among those individuals an independent subject (b_1) who (subject) is having (verb) the experience (object) and (b_2) who (subject) is-expressing (verb) the object of the experience. But if there are experiences and this must be accepted we have to accept language as a way of speaking about them. But this does not necessarily entail that there must be a plurality of distinct subjects and distinct objects which are acted upon by the subjects.

King-Farlow's contention is that the language of monistic naturalism can be articulated in such a way that speakers employ only

¹⁹⁸ D. Hume, Treatise on Human Nature II, Appendix 318-319. See also A.H. Basson, David Hume (London: Penguin Books, 1958), pp. 126ff. For a modern defense of the view that the "I" is dissolvable into a series of basic observational predicates see Bertrand Russell, An Inquiry Into Meaning and Truth (New York: W.W. Norton, 1940), Chapter VII.

¹⁹⁹ See John King-Farlow, "Myths of the Given and the Cogito Proof" Philosophical Studies XII, (1961) 49-53; and John King-Farlow and J.M. Rothstein, "Dialogues concerning Natural Metaphysics," Southern Journal of Philosophy VI (1968) 24-30; John King-Farlow, "Quantification Theory and Ontological Monism," Archiv fur Allgemeine Wissenschafts theorie XIV (1972) 1-12; J. King-Farlow and J. Espinaco-Virseda, "Matter, Form and Logic," International Logic Review II (1971) 93-104.

one subject term and commit themselves only to the existence of one individual - the universe as a revered whole, as a proper object of awe and "mystical" or "ecstatic" experience.

"It is possible" he says, "to construct at least one language in which we can, in some important, properly relevant sense of "say," and "state" and "truth," say what one says and state the truth that one states.... This language may usefully be called It-tish, because it has only one nominal-pronominal term "It" which is the subject of all sentences."²⁰⁰

We do, in fact, use such monistic sentences intermingled in our "pluralistic" language as may be seen when phrases and sentences like the following are encountered: "It seems that...." or "It appears that...." or "It is thought (considered, surmised) that....," "It is raining," "It's nice to be out again" etc. Such uses are extremely valuable as we have no need to attempt to single out one particular to which the "It" must refer. At the same time, this word "It" in It-tish could be used to denote a unique "totality-entity" very like "Deus sive Natura" which is the one single Substance in Spinoza's ontology.

Suppose philosophers to concede that it is possible to construct a language of this kind. It would appear that, at least for the present, it is quite impractical for men to use it religiously (as opposed to using its transformations with linguistic fluency) until we have been conditioned to look at the World in a thoroughly monistic way. But as yet very few are convinced that this is the correct view and so it seems that we shall remain in the status quo. However, we must be prepared to consider "every new thing" as Russell himself

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John King-Farlow, "Quantification Theory and Ontological Monism" Archiv fur Allgemeine Wissenschaftstheorie IV (1972) 1.

rightly says:

Philosophy is to be studied, not for the sake of any definite answers to its questions, since no definite answers can, as a rule, be known to be true, but rather for the sake of the questions themselves; because these questions enlarge our conceptions of what is possible, enrich our intellectual imagination and diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes the mind against speculation....²⁰¹

One of Tillich's main desires was to transcend the subject-object structure, since he speaks of it on many occasions, but always in a theological frame of reference.²⁰² In a philosophical frame of reference, it seems that it is not incompatible with Tillich's outlook to claim that in being-itself, all things (persons, material things, etc.) have their ground, and following to some extent the Spinozian structure of Substance and Modes, we note the monistic conception of being-itself and its "emanations."²⁰³ Subjective and objective reason are united in the "depth" of reason. If any or all of these dualistic conceptions can be resolved, as we previously noted, (a) by the annihilation of the one side for the sake of the other or (b) the establishing of a uniting principle which contains both, then it seems that Tillich might be prepared to consider the suggestions propounded above in the form of an It-language. In this form of language we have at least shown that (a) is possible. In the language of theonomy (b)

²⁰¹ Bertrand Russell, The Problems of Philosophy (New York: Galaxy Books, 1912), p. 161.

²⁰² See, for example, S.T., I., p. 278 and S.T., III., pp. 242, 253, 255, 257 and 385.

²⁰³ S.T., I., pp. 170 and 158.

seems to be possible.²⁰⁴ However, the whole referential frame used by the system of Tillich would have to be altered and so Tillich would be faced with a very serious choice: he could accept the new ideas with the consequent abandoning of the system as it now stands and come out with a monistic kind of God-world, not surreptitiously, but quite definitely, or he could retain the system and decide to ignore the features of monistic language. I sense that he would choose the latter, for he writes:

The subject-object cleavage underlies language. Our enumeration of its ambiguities... can be summed up in the statement that no language is possible without the subject-object cleavage, and that language is continually brought to self-defeat by the very cleavage.²⁰⁵

VII.8. Summary.

We have reviewed the various "isms" relevant to Tillich's philosophy. It would seem from the evidence which we have produced that the way in which a word like "atheism" is defined has a considerable bearing on the sort of decision we may make.

The considerable similarities between the ideas of Spinoza and those of Tillich suggest very strongly a close relation between the two systems. It appears to be readily accepted that Spinoza's system is the epitome of monistic pantheistic naturalism, and we may ask ourselves if Tillich's system is of this kind. The question of the relationship of Being-itself and creative nature as the ground of all finite beings is certainly established but the problem of pantheism

²⁰⁴ S.T., III., p. 258.

²⁰⁵ S.T., III., p. 253.

and monism cannot be settled to one's complete satisfaction. For both Tillich and Spinoza, reason or the autonomy of reason is of paramount importance and their ethical systems are not too dissimilar. It seems to me that Tillich is an admirer of Spinoza since he mentioned him frequently and favourably (generally). For example, referring to the concept of "courage" Tillich writes:

In a systematic philosophy of the strictness and consistency of Spinoza's this is a remarkable fact and shows the two cognitive motives which always determine this doctrine of courage: the universally ontological and the specifically moral.²⁰⁶

It would seem that Tillich's philosophy runs very close indeed to certain types of naturalism. We noted the three most important tenets of one type of naturalism, namely the causal primacy of organized matter in the order of nature, pluralism and the contingency of all existence. The fact of the contingency of all existence certainly supports Tillich's notion that God does not exist since if he did, he would have to be a contingent being. And this cannot be. However, if something "is causally explained its reality is affirmed.... To look for causes means to look for the power of being in a thing."²⁰⁷ But at the same time, causality expresses non-being, for if a thing has a cause, it is not its own cause; it does not possess its own power of being. The effect of this contingency is anxiety, but man is endowed with an ontological courage which allows him to face up to the fact of his contingency and so enquire into the basis of this courage. This is the question of God.

²⁰⁶ C.B., p. 22.

²⁰⁷ S.T., I., pp. 195-6.

Because there are finite, contingent beings, (1) there must be a ground or source of being which provides them with the power to be; (2) this source of being must be unconditioned, for otherwise it would be contingent, requiring its own source of being; and (3) this source of being cannot be a being, for then it would be finite and contingent, lacking the power to be. These properties tell us little about God's attributes, but as Ford says, "they do form an articulated natural theology, complete in itself and independent of all special divine revelation."²⁰⁸ Here we see a complete religious naturalism or at least, the possibility of a religious naturalism.

The question of pluralism raises quite a problem. But this idea of pluralism seems to belong to what might be termed "realistic naturalism" in which we may say that it is obvious that the world is composed of very different things. But all types of naturalism are monistic to some degree since the apparent plurality of all things could be subsumed under the secular character of nature. That God and Nature in Spinoza's philosophy are interchangeable reveals the religious background of monistic naturalism. Tillich's religious philosophy is, I feel, very closely related to a religious naturalism especially if a change is made in Spinoza's phrase "God or Nature" to Tillich's phrase "God or Being-itself." Each phrase indicates the underlying principle (the source or ground) which sustains and supports all finite beings.

What if Tillich's monistic leanings could be established without

²⁰⁸ Lewis S. Ford, "Tillich's Implicit Natural Theology," Scottish Journal of Theology, XXIV (1971), 264.

doubt? Then since the subject-object cleavage underlies language, Tillich's symbolic language would have to be carefully considered. His symbolic language cannot be used to say clearly and directly what has to be said and any method which would clarify theological language would be welcomed. With further research into the linguistic resources of King-Farlow's "It-tish" monistic language which has been mentioned, there just might be a possibility of attempting to use this type of language. But it seems to me that the day of truly religious human use of a truly monistic language is a long way off because of our conditioning over the centuries to insist upon the subject-object dichotomy.

Tillich has taken into his system many naturalistic elements because he appears to be convinced that such elements are valid. He has also incorporated other elements, existentialistic, idealistic and phenomenistic. But Tillich's apparent eclecticism is neutralized by the dominating, centralizing explications of "essence" and "existence" and a number of unique contributions which he has made to philosophical and theological thought.

CHAPTER VIII

TILlich'S UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS

The rejection by ancient Greek philosophers of supernatural accounts of natural phenomena and the rejection of unrelated, random or trivial facts led the philosophical Schoolmen of the Middle Ages to concentrate their efforts on developing the notions of "coherence" and "system," while leaving the supernatural to the domain of theology. This caused an unfortunate divergence of the two disciplines of philosophy and theology. In the nineteenth century, the rise of evolutionism all but caused a complete break.

Tillich sought for a matrix in which he could merge his philosophical interests with his theological ideas in an effort to bring together two disciplines which he thought should be interdependent and not independent. What Tillich terms the "method of correlation" is an important contribution to philosophical and theological thought. The role of philosophy was regarded as that of articulating fundamental questions about the source and nature of being which arises out of man's existential situation. The role of theology was to be constructive suggesting possible answers to the questions philosophy has asked. The understanding of the relation between the conditioned contingent being and unconditioned being, between the finite and the infinite, in other words, the God-man relationship became one of Tillich's useful contributions.

It is the God-man relationship which, in its secular form of ultimate concern, Tillich felt, must be made intelligible to the modern generation. If we look at the titles of the five divisions which make up the Systematic Theology, the first word in the title in each case refers to that aspect which is based on philosophical investigation: Reason, Being, Existence, Life and History. In the remainder of each title we find these words matched by theological concepts: Revelation, God, the Christ, the Spirit, and the Kingdom of God. It is also interesting to note that Tillich implicitly rejects any form of authoritarianism in relation to the theological concepts since each is called a "quest" - the quest for revelation, the quest for God, the quest for the Christ, the quest for unambiguous life, and the quest for the Kingdom of God. These quests are to be based on a type of rational endeavour since "reason asks for revelation." In these various quests, Tillich elucidates the meanings of the terms he is using, often presenting novel meanings and explications which he hopes will make sense to the modern scientifically oriented man's troublesome religious questions.

Looking at the overall uniqueness of the contributions of Tillich to philosophical and theological thought, we can detect his ability to confront the secular "Death of God" movement of the mid-twentieth century, his ability to distil from the various philosophical and theological positions certain concepts which he synthesized into a coherent and cohesive whole, and his ability to confront the positivists by his use of linguistic analysis in his theological re-interpretations.

Tillich saw clearly the breakdown of communication between

traditional Christianity and the twentieth century secularized scientific world.

Our period has decided for a secular world. That was a great and much-needed decision. It threw a church from her throne, a church which had become a power of suppression and superstition. It gave consecration and holiness to our daily life and work. Yet it excluded those deep things for which religion stands: the feeling for the inexhaustible mystery of life, the grip of an ultimate meaning of existence, and the invincible power of an unconditioned devotion. These things cannot be excluded. If we try to expel them in their divine images, they re-emerge in daemonic images.¹

Though Tillich admits that this is a secular world, he refuses to accept the radical immanence asserted by the "Death of God" theologians on the one hand, and the radical transcendence (of the deists) on the other. His own position appears to be one of immanence tempered with a type of interpersonal and teleological transcendence.² The dialectical reasoning of Tillich's own theology is "theonomous" precisely because it states in theological terms the resolution of the existential conflict between heteronomous and autonomous reason which philosophy discovers but cannot resolve.

Examination of the various philosophical and theological positions led Tillich to reject outright both supranaturalism and materialism. He accepted, however, in a modified form, a religious

¹S.F., pp. 180-181.

²Tillich seems to espouse ideas on inter-personal transcendence similar to put forward by John Macmurray. "All knowledge of persons is by revelation. My knowledge of you depends not merely on what I do, but upon what you do; and if you refuse to reveal yourself to me, I cannot know you, however much I may wish to do so." John Macmurray, Persons in Relation (London: Faber, 1961), p. 169.

type of naturalism despite its attendant dangers of pantheism and monism.

His use of a terminological precision in language to introduce some radically new concept is well illustrated by the phrase "Jesus as the Christ" in place of the easily misunderstood phrase "Jesus Christ." The designation of the Essential Man is quite unique. By this change in the language, Tillich has avoided the very difficult question of the divine-human nature of Jesus Christ. In the new description, Tillich means to suggest quite clearly that Jesus designates a human being, subject to the conditions of existence, while Jesus as the Christ is the criterion for any other instance of the God-man relationship, whether within formal Christianity or outside of it.

The analyses of the terms "essence" and "existence" must have suggested to many that something must come after the existence of any particular individual ceases. Adams saw that the idea of "essence-existence" needed to be rounded off. He wrote "Here we have a dialectic between the created goodness of things, the estrangement (or distorted existence) and their possibility of reconciliation."³ It was only in the last two subsections of the final section of Volume III of Systematic Theology that Tillich acquaints us with his method of reconciliation.⁴

Creation in time produces the possibility of self-realization, estrangement and reconciliation of

³J.L. Adams, "Tillich's interpretation of History," T.P.T., p. 301.

⁴S.T., III., pp. 400-422.

the creature, which, in eschatological terminology, is the way from essence through existence to essentialization.⁵

The use of the word "essentialization" is another of the unique contributions of Tillich. His very short account in the final volume of Systematic Theology is very suggestive of ideas Tillich might have pursued in depth. It is regrettable that Tillich has developed this concept of "essentialization" so late in his work and in such a meagre way. It is regrettable because essentialization is the ultimate concern of every finite being, and, as such, the concept has great importance for all the human race.

The transition from essence to existence is irrational and not dialectical.⁶ Tillich's view of essence as the "what" and the "what-should-be" has been considered. Existence is the estrangement from "what-should-be," and it might seem that man's ultimate concern, his ultimate quest, ought to be a return from existence back to essence. Though this way essence-existence-essence is the Platonic process, Tillich rejects it since it could lead to a series of "re-births," a doctrine prevalent in some Oriental religions.

Essentialization, for Tillich, is neither a form of essence (pure potentiality) nor a form of existence (estranged actuality) but, while deriving from these two, is a form beyond the separation of potentiality and actuality. Essentialization is the process associated with the fulfilled telos and hence seems to correspond

⁵S.T., III., p. 422. (My italics).

⁶S.T., II., pp. 3 and 91.

with what is referred to in traditional Christianity as the Final Judgment. But Tillich's notion of "essentialization" is radically different from the myth of the Final Judgment. "Essentialization," for Tillich, appears to mean the exposure of the realized possibilities (that is, the positive in existence exposed as positive) and the exposure of the unrealized possibilities (when the possibilities in existence have not been actualized, in his words, the exposure of the negative as negative). "The telos of man as an individual is determined by the decisions he makes in existence on the basis of the potentialities given to him by destiny."⁷ This means that there are degrees of fulfilled telos or degrees of the essentialized state of man.⁸

The uniqueness of Tillich's concept of "essentialization" is seen in the application of the term. First, it is not something which will occur in the far distant future, nor has it anything in common with the resurrection of the dead. Essentialization is "here and now, in the permanent transition of the temporal to the eternal, the negative is defeated in its claim to be positive, a claim it supports using the positive and mixing ambiguously with it."⁹ Indeed, the negative has no being of its own; it lives from

⁷S.T., III., p. 407.

⁸"Participation in the eternal life depends on a creative synthesis of a being's essential nature with what it has made of it in its temporal existence. In so far as the negative has maintained possession of it, it is exposed in its negativity and excluded from eternal memory. Whereas, in so far as the essential has conquered existential distortion its standing is higher in eternal life" (S.T., III., p. 401).

⁹S.T., III., pp. 398-399.

the positive. Second, it avoids the absolute good and absolute evil inherent or implied in many forms of predestination. The final "absolute judgment" into "sheep" and "goats," into the "absolutely blessed" and "absolutely damned" is something which Tillich believes, no finite being or happening could support. The so-called "damned soul," and everlasting fire, Hell, are ideas either rejected by Tillich or considerably modified by him. Essentialization certainly "emphasizes the despair of having wasted one's potentialities, yet also assures the elevation of the positive within existence (even in the most unfulfilled life) into eternity."¹⁰ Third, there must be, at least, a minimal participation in eternal life for all human beings since every existent human being must have actualized a minimum (at least) of his potentiality to become actual at all. So nothing and no one is so ambiguously "bad" that it is possible to assert that he has actualized none of what he essentially was. This accounts for the grades or degrees of fulfilled telos and also for the possibility of a higher standing in eternal life. Thus Tillich emerges with an interesting paradox as he attempts to give an existentialist account of essentialization.

Tillich's unique contribution in the sphere of symbolic language is not, of course, his employment of symbols, since symbols were used in myth from the beginning of human history. Nor is it his use of Christian symbols that sets him apart, since these symbols have been known and used for centuries. But Tillich's distinctive

¹⁰S.T., III., p. 408. Tillich's ideas concerning heaven, hell, immortality etc., are interesting but are beyond the scope of this study.

contribution derives in good part from his re-definition of the word "symbol" to express participation in that which is symbolized. It is the resulting application of religious symbols when "symbols" bear this profound connotation which makes Tillich's use of religious symbols unique.

The relation of the important triad of ideas, essence-existence-essentialization to the functioning of religious symbols is a key point when considering whether religious symbols are really necessary. Religious symbols are quite unnecessary in both the stage of pure essence, and in the stage of complete essentialization.¹¹ The place and function of religious symbols is bound to the transition stage between these two, namely the state of existence. Existence could be looked upon as a mixture of potentiality and actuality, the existential causing distortion, ambiguity and estrangement from God in man's actual existence. It is the existential in man which causes the essential in him to "see through a glass darkly." Man has no "clear" association with God and religious symbols have to be used not only to focus our ultimate concern but also to be able to communicate the deeper things of God when literal language fails to make sense. But though religious symbols are of value only in actual human existence and are interpreted as answers to the questions of human existence, they must not be misunderstood as products of man's wishful imagination. They are "ultimately" serious connections between life and life eternal, though at the same time trying to prevent man from bringing God into the subject-

¹¹Cf. R.E.T., p. 341.

object scheme. Bringing God into the subject-object scheme would make him into a being alongside other beings.

If religious symbols are of use only when man is in a state of actual existence, there seems to be a suggestion that whatever conceptual view we may have of reality, the question of the necessity for symbols will be unaffected. In other words, whether we, as actual existing persons, interpret reality with the concepts of a monistic or a pluralistic ontology would not seem to effect the necessity of religious symbols. For religious symbols are only required because we are actual, estranged and contingent creatures and not because we consider reality to conform to any special philosophical position. Of course, in order to use language about God, the ultimate reality, Tillich asserts that symbolic language must be used, since we cannot speak of Him in a literal type of language. Whether in the other states, essential and essentialized, man uses language or not will never be known but we do know that symbols would not be necessary since we would be with God and so not estranged from Him.¹²

The bases of the philosophical theology of Paul Tillich have remained fairly constant throughout his long life but the system does show signs of growth through intellectual and spiritual struggle and particularly in his attempts to refute his critics. He never seemed quite satisfied, for example, with the "theory of correlation"

¹²I do not wish to undermine what has been said in Chapter VII concerning monistic language, but since I am concerned with the part of Tillich's system which is symbolic/theological, it seems quite profitable to compare and contrast this notion with other meta-theological languages.

or with the non-symbolic (or symbolic) status of the assertion,
 "God is Being-itself."

At the beginning of his Systematic Theology, in the Introduction, Tillich stated that any (Christian) theological system must interpret the truth of the Christian message to every new generation, and this he has attempted to do. Tillich himself felt that he had adhered rigidly to the task he had set himself, for near the end of his life he wrote:

My whole theological work has been directed to the interpretation of religious symbols in such a way that the secular man - and we are all secular - can understand and be moved by them.¹³

Tillich made the issues in religion vital and dynamic. However, in his very last years of life, working with Eliade, he felt the opening of a new vista. He intended to go further in philosophical theology using his theory of religious symbols as a basis for dialogue with other religious and in relation to a "different fragmentary manifestation of theonomy This is my hope for the future of theology."¹⁴ Speculation on how Tillich might have pursued ideas concerning the "manifestation of theonomy" is interesting, but is a path which would lead us beyond the boundary of this study.

¹³U.C., pp. 88-89. (My italics).

¹⁴P. Tillich, The Future of Religions ed. J.C. Brauer (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 7.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Appendix 1

One could usefully write a whole dissertation in tracing points of likeness and divergence between Aristotle and Tillich when they speak of man as a being with characteristically ("naturally," "essentially") human potentialities for excellence which he ought to actualize as fully as possible in his way of life. It suffices for my immediate purposes here to point out that Tillich's uses of "non-being" need to be understood against the background of a teleological naturalism at times strikingly similar to Aristotle's, whereby talk of nature (physics) in connection with man is understood to be partly talk about what man is, partly talk about what man can become, and partly talk about what man ought to become. Aristotle's and Tillich's conceptions of nature are partly evaluative conceptions and incompatible with the idea of natural science as a so-called value-free inquiry. For example, in some contexts in Tillich's writings, being tends to merge with being-itself, that is, with the source or ground of the beings of particular existents, or with the power of being whereby these existents exists. (See S.T., Vol. I., Part II "Being and God.") Aristotle formulated the problem: "And indeed the question which was raised of old and is raised now and always, and is always the subject of doubt, namely what being is, (ti-to-on), is just the question what is substance (ousia)? For it is this that some assert to be one, others more than one, and that some assert to be limited, others unlimited. And so we also must consider briefly and primarily and almost exclusively what that is which is in this sense." (Metaphysics Z I. 1028b, 2-8). Aristotle said he would concentrate "chiefly and primarily and almost exclusively" on ousia. Only concrete existents exist in the

full sense of the word. Forms, properties, qualities, material components, relation, powers exist, but not in the primary sense. (Cf. Ivor Leclerc, Whitehead's Metaphysics - an introductory exposition (London: Allen and Unwin, 1958), Chapter II, pp. 17-28. For a discussion of ousia, see Joseph Owens, The Doctrine of Being in Aristotelian Metaphysics (Toronto: Pontifical Institutes of Mediaeval Studies, 1951). Chapter IV, pp. 65-74. Other topics: Truth (S.T., III., pp. 252-258; Nic. Eth. VI, 2, 1139a, 28-30), Actuality (S.T., III., p. 12; S.T., I., pp. 273ff; Metaphysics H 1043 a 6-7) Form (S.T., I., pp. 197ff; Metaphysics Z 1035b, 28-31) Categories (S.T., I., 197-198; Categories 3b 21-22) Particulars (S.T., I., 254-255; Categories 1b, 6-8) Universals (S.T., I., pp. 254-255; Metaphysics Z 1029b 33) Existence (S.T., II., pp. 19ff; Posterior Analytics 92b 14) Form and Matter (S.T., I., p. 178; Metaphysics Z 1037b 7ff.) Negation and Non-being (S.T., I., pp. 186ff; Metaphysics H 1045a 6ff and Metaphysics G 21, 1003b 6ff), the Sleeping and Waking States and Dreaming Innocence (S.T., II., pp. 32-36, 62, 67, 70, 91, 109, 128 and S.T., III., pp. 23, 96, 129 and De Anima II, 1, 412a, 16-27, 412 (413a3) and many others.

APPENDIX 2

Appendix 2

One must take note of a peculiarity in Tillich's use of the word "essence" and its cognates. He writes: (S.T., I., p. 202-203)

The basic ambiguity (in the term "essence") lies in the oscillation of the meaning between an empirical and an evaluating sense. Essence as the nature of a thing, or as the quality in which a thing participates, or as a universal, has one character. Essence as that from which being has "fallen," the true and undistorted nature of things, has another character.... Whatever exists, that is, "stands out" of mere potentiality, is more than it is in the state of mere potentiality and less than it could be in the power of its essential nature. (My italics.)

The first part of this quotation associates the distinction between existence₂ and that from which it has fallen, i.e. existence₁ or essence, with the valuational sense of "essence" (essence_v). In other words, "essence" in the essence/existence₂ contrast is essence_v. Some lines later, however, we have the idea introduced of a state which is what a being could be when its potentialities are fully actualized by the exercise of the power of that being's essential nature. Thus we have an essence_v which is differentiated from a state of pure potentiality, a state which, in terms of the essence/existence₂ contrast, is man's essential state. Can we conclude from this that Tillich is simply here confused? Or that man's essential state of existence₁ is according to the perspective either an essential_v state or an essential_e state? Or is it his conscious view that there is some coincidence of man's essential state as finite and purely potential, and man as he might in the last days become?

The evidence points to the latter as the most plausible interpretation, though Tillich's view here is little more than obscurely hinted at. (Cf. Chapter VIII of this dissertation). In the

discussions of the New Being in S.T., II., (p. 167) and of History in S.T., III., (p. 332), we find the same apparent paradox:

No men are totally healed, not even those who have encountered the healing power as it appears in Jesus as the Christ.

History... drives towards the universal unambiguous fulfilment of the potentiality of being.

What sort of strange "unambiguous fulfilment" is it where "no men are totally healed"? Moreover there is no doubt that, at least when he wrote S.T., III., for Tillich creation and salvation, and the essential states of each, are mirror images. (Cf. S.T., III., p. 395). However, in later pages, the nature of the fulfilment is importantly and for our purpose very relevantly qualified - Tillich talks of "fulfilment beyond the separation of potentiality and actuality" (S.T., III., p. 421).

The tragic is not conquered by avoiding the finite as much as possible.... The tragic is conquered by the presence of being-itself within the finite.... History can be fulfilled in the eschaton only if salvation does not presuppose elevation above finitude (S.T., I., p. 254).

The fulfilment of human potentiality involved in salvation, in the return to the New Being, is not the removal of human finitude; it is not the complete actualization of potentiality of the classical Aristotelian vision. Instead, it is a quasi-mystical union which, as Tillich himself concedes,¹ defies clear analysis. This defiance is

¹S.T., III., p. 422: Such formulations concerning the Divine Life and its relation to the life of the universe seem to transcend the possibility of human assertions even within the "theological circle." They seem to violate the mystery of the divine "abyss." Theology must answer such a criticism by pointing out, first, that the language used is symbolic; it avoids the danger of subjecting the ultimate mystery to the subject-object scheme, which would distort God into an object to be analyzed and described.

ill-matched, one might feel, with the rather careful distinction of the "above" metaphor which is, Tillich holds, inappropriate, from the "beyond" metaphor, which is not. The estranged state is the separation of man from God, creature from Creator, all beings from the ground of their being. The essential state "before" the Fall is, Tillich insists, not a state of perfection - "only the conscious union of existence and essence is perfection" (S.T., II., p. 34). The Fall is not a fall from perfection, but a transition of a state without to a state with the impurity of estrangement. The transition back from existence to essence is not a return to a state from which man fell, but a transition to a state where the evaluative language wherein the Fall and the essence/existence₂ distinction is expressed can no more be used.

Essence empowers and judges that which exists (sc. exists₂). It gives it its power of being, and, at the same time, it stands against it as commanding law. Where essence and existence (sc. existence₂) are united, there is neither law nor judgment. But existence (sc. existence₂) is not united with essence. (S.T., I., p. 203).

We can now see that Tillich's aim is a coherent grouping of these slippery denotations and connotations of "essence." In the last days, what a man is will become what he ought to be, not in that the finitude of man is removed, but in that its ontological inadequacy will be met by the power of Being-itself. Similarly, then also will a man become what he was before he fell, but, again, not in the sense of a return to a perfect state, but in the attaining of a special kind of fulfillment, the special potentiality for which once constituted the essence of man, unadulterated by existential₂ estrangement.

APPENDIX 3

Appendix 3

A polarity is the opposition of two qualities, tendencies or elements, which, despite their contrariety, are complementary or interdependent. The two contraries within the polarity are essentially one in such a way that neither could exist -- whether in the realm of thought or in the realm of reality -- without the coinherence of its opposite. Notwithstanding this fact, either or both of these poles can gain relative independence. That is to say, one of them may attain predominance by increasing tension against its opposite, but only up to a certain limit. After this point is reached, both poles disintegrate, regardless of which had become the dominant factor, since their very being is their polar integrity. Tillich explains it in this way:

A polar relation is a relation of interdependent elements, each of which is necessary for the other one and for the whole, although it is in tension with the opposite element. The tension drives both to conflicts and beyond the conflicts to possible unions of the polar elements. Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 55.

For example, one can imagine a realm of nature beside or outside the realm of history but there is no realm of individuality without universality. One may think of the two poles of a magnet, having different tendencies but the one cannot exist without the other. Other examples from Tillich's theological ideas would include the three pairs of ontological elements - Individualization and Participation, Dynamics and Form, Freedom and Destiny. The first element of each of these pairs expresses what Tillich calls the self-relatedness of being, its power of being something for itself, while the second element expresses what Tillich refers to as the belongingness of being, its character of

being as part of the universe of being. (S.T., I., pp. 165, 174-186, 198 and 200).

APPENDIX 4

Appendix 4

Angst or Angest.

The terms Angst and Angest in Danish and German are translated into English in various ways. Price writes: "Dread is admittedly a poor translation of the Danish Angest (German Angst), but it has become now an established expression for Kierkegaard's category. Anxiety has been suggested by some - Tillich, for example, in The Courage To Be - but it is too precise an expression for the vague anxiousness which Kierkegaard talks about. Unamino's agonie is also too sharp and too self-conscious. Lowrie's suggestion of "agonizing premonition" (Kierkegaard p. 627) is not a very suitable compound. The most appropriate word for it would appear to be the French angoisse, conveying the idea of a disturbing quiet, a shadowed foreboding, which is not quite conscious enough to become fear." George Price, The Narrow Pass - A Study of Kierkegaard's Concept of Man (London: Hutchinson, 1963), p. 79 n42.

It is interesting that the word dread is used in some English translations for Sartre's angoisse and for Heidegger's Angst. See J.P. Sartre Existential Psychoanalysis, Trans. by Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Philosophical Library, 1953), and Existence and Being, Trans. and ed. W. Brock (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1949), but in Being and Time, Trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, (New York: Harper Bros., 1962), p. 505, both anxiety and dread are used by the translators. P.A. Schlipp states that anguish is preferable to dread and this word was chosen for Angst in the translation of Karl Jaspers' writings. See J. Thyassen, "The Concept of Foundering," The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers ed. P.A. Schlipp, (New York: Tudor

Publishing Co., 1957), p. 329. The English word anxiety was chosen by Tillich himself, and appears in all his works.

Dread, for Kierkegaard is "'the insidious objectless anxiousness which shadows every man, and which cannot be dismissed or explained away.' It is 'the presentiment of a something which is nothing...' 'the alien power' which enslaves a man so that he is hypnotized by what he fears... 'the vertigo of freedom...' 'the first reflex of possibility...' 'the reality of freedom as possibility prior to possibility...' 'a power loved and dreaded...' 'the next day.'" (George Price, op. cit., p. 43). S. Kierkegaard, The Concept of Dread (London: Oxford U.P., 1946), pp. 38ff and The Journals (London: Oxford U.P., 1938), entries 402 and 967.

In Tillich's writings, especially in The Courage To Be, anxiety is closely linked with courage. Non-being is the threat to being, and the inner awareness of that threat is, for Tillich, anxiety, an emotion which belongs to finite existence₂. There are pathological forms of anxiety, which can be healed and removed. (C.B., pp. 64ff). But the experience of one's actual human finitude, or of the fact that non-being belongs to one's own being, is existential not pathological and cannot be removed. (S.T., I., pp. 191f). But it is in his book The Courage To Be that Tillich offers a systematic discussion of both anxiety and non-being. He introduces the concept of self-affirmation, (in other writings this is called self-actualization) to characterize the basic act of one's existing. (C.B., pp. 3, 20-22, 34). A distinction is made between "ontic," "spiritual" and "moral" self-affirmation in man. The first is the fact that one is existent (i.e. existent₂) and is affirming himself. It seems to be one's actual

self-identity within the categorial system, or the organic and psychological notion of self. As absolute non-being has a relation to the categories, it is absolute non-being which "threatens man's ontic self-affirmation, relatively in terms of fate, absolutely in terms of death" (C.B., p. 41). For, Tillich explains, the anxiety of fate and death is experienced in the pointless necessity (fate) and the radical contingency (finally death) which appear as the darker sides of the fact that one is delivered over to the spatio-temporal, causal system of reality. (C.B., pp. 42-45). It should be noted that the anxiety of the categories is that of "non-being, simply and directly," whereas the anxiety connected with the polarities is "the anxiety of not being what we essentially are," or relative non-being. (S.T., I., p. 199).

Ontic anxiety "is the self-awareness of the finite as finite" and is the type of anxiety directed towards fate and death. Ontic anxiety is such because it is felt by a particular man towards his particular condition of finitude, towards the general categories, fate and death, as they particularly affect him. It is not anxiety because of some particular thing like the whereabouts of a lost child. As ontic, it is directly related to the ontological categories, especially towards space as insecurity, and towards time, the central category of finitude as the "melancholy awareness" of transitoriness. The concept of tungsind, melancholy, is one used by Kierkegaard (see George Price, op. cit., pp. 48-51 and especially p. 81, n. 57). The anxiety about time and space becomes continually more concrete, and then centers in the anxiety about death. The anxiety about cause and substance comes to center in the anxiety about fate, for "fate and death are the way in which our ontic self-manifestation is threatened

by non-being." (C.B., p. 42). (The four main categories of finitude are time, space, causality and substance. S.T., I., p. 193).

The concept of anxiety in Tillich's writings must not be confused with the concept of fear. Though the concept of anxiety may be psychological, the importance of this concept of anxiety lies, for Tillich, in the ontological realm. Fear is psychological. Fear, as opposed to anxiety, has a definite object which can be faced, analyzed, attacked and endured. "It is being afraid of something" (C.B., p. 37). It is outside, i.e. caused by something external. But anxiety is inside, a state caused by something internal, having no external object. (cf. Kierkegaard, The Concept of Dread, op. cit., p. 38).

Tillich sums up the position in this way: "Non-being... threatens man's spiritual self-affirmation, relatively in terms of emptiness, absolutely in terms of meaninglessness. It threatens man's moral self-affirmation, relatively in terms of guilt, absolutely in terms of condemnation" (C.B., p. 41. For spiritual anxiety, see C.B., pp. 46-51; For moral anxiety see C.B., pp. 51-54.) The first of these threats, experienced as the anxiety of meaninglessness, is discussed by Tillich as the anxiety of doubt. Doubt means "the awareness of not having," that is, of failing meaningfully to possess spiritual contents. (C.B., pp. 48, 171 and 173).

Tillich refers to this century as the "age of anxiety." (C.B., p. 35). It is interesting to note that W.H. Auden has entitled one of his poems with this phrase which he believes most accurately characterizes this period. (W.H. Auden The Age of Anxiety - a baroque eclogue (New York: Random House, 1947). Leonard Bernstein has composed

a symphony entitled The Age of Anxiety, the premiere of which was held in 1949.

APPENDIX 5

Appendix 5

Kairos.

The appearance of Jesus as the Christ in historical time following a period of preparation was a break-through of the first order. The moment of this break-through Tillich calls Kairos, "the right time," or "the opportune time" or "the fulfilment of time." It not only expresses the dynamic movement of history but also sums up "the feeling of many people in central Europe after the First World War that a movement of history had appeared which was pregnant with a new understanding of the meaning of history and life." (P.E., p. 369). Tillich applied the notion of kairos not only in discussing history but also in dealing with problems of ethics and even of epistemology. (See "Kairos and Logos," Interpretation of History, pp. 123-175.)

The term kairos should be contrasted with the term chronos. Chronos is clock time or measured time. (S.T., III., pp. 369-370; P.E., p. 33). Kairos stresses the quality of the time, while chronos measures the quantity of time. Kairos is the time of revelation, for the divine revelation has appeared at "the most propitious moment." The original entry of Jesus as the Christ is the "great kairos" but his manifestation is re-experienced again and again in moments of what Tillich calls "fragmentary ecstasy." Kairos, for Tillich has three senses:

Kairos in its unique and universal sense is, for Christian faith, the appearing of Jesus as the Christ. Kairos in its general and special sense of the philosopher of history is every turning-point in history in which the eternal judges and transforms the temporal. Kairos in its special sense, as decisive for our present situation, is the coming of a new theonomy on the soil of a secularized and emptied autonomous culture. (P.E., pp. 46-47.)

The awareness of kairos is "not a matter of detached observation but of involved experience" (S.T., III., pp. 370-371). Thus any age is ready for a further relative kairos if it is characterized by the openness of the individual. This does not mean that the age has to be necessarily more "religious" than any other age, but it must be "an age that is turned toward, and open to, the unconditional... in which the consciousness of the presence of the unconditional permeates and guides all cultural functions and forms. The divine, for such a state of mind, is not a problem but a presupposition" (P.E., p. 43).

APPENDIX 6

Appendix 6

New Being.

The heart of Tillich's doctrine is the uniting once again of man with the ground of his being, and this means that salvation has an ontological level of meaning. That is to say, it corresponds to estrangement as the category expressive of the ontological condition of man prior to his salvation. Thus salvation implies that which is not estranged. In fact "salvation is reclaiming from the old (estranged being) and transferring into the New Being." (S.T., II., p. 166).

In man's actual existence, anxiety is rampant and the structures of finitude become structures of destruction. From this condition, there arises a human quest, (S.T., I., p. 23), a quest for New Being, that is, for a mode of being which is free from the negativities of existence₂. This quest for New Being can arise, because, even in the condition of estrangement, man is aware of the infinity to which he belongs.

The appearance of New Being is the beginning of fulfilment and so marks the end of the old situation. It indicates the end of the reign of law, the law of "man's essential being standing against his existence, commanding and judging it" (S.T., II., p. 119). It means the end of that existence which is estrangement, ambiguity and disintegration. Tillich points out the "newness" of New Being, the beginning that heralds the end which has appeared in a personal life. This is as it should be for it could not be otherwise, for the only being with finite freedom is a person. The new Being manifest in the picture of Jesus as the Christ represents the essential unity between Man and God. For essential God-manhood means that "there is one man in

whom God found his image undistorted, and who stands for all mankind - the one, who for this reason, is called the Son and the Christ."

(Eternal Now, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963, p. 76). See particularly P. Tillich, The New Being (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), and Kevan B. Osborne, New Being (Martinus Nykoff; The Hague, 1969).

APPENDIX 7

Appendix 7

Categories.

In Aristotle's logic, the term "category" refers to (1) the predicate of a proposition and (2) one of the ultimate modes of language that may be asserted in predication, namely substance, quality, quantity, relation, place, time, state, position, action and passion.

However, it must be acknowledged that commentators on Aristotle are not agreed as to whether Aristotle's categories in sense (2) above are a classification of the ultimate modes of language, or the ultimate kinds of things. As Moravcsik remarks: "it is also clear that Aristotle's way of parceling up the areas of predication into problems does not coincide with those ways that have been fashionable in recent times." (p. 96).

See Aristotle's Categories and De Interpretatione trans. with notes by J.L. Ackrill, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).
 G.E.L. Owen, "Inherence" Phronesis X (1965), pp. 97-105.
 J.M.E. Moravcsik, "Aristotle on Predication," Philosophical Review LXXVI (1967), pp. 80-96.

Kant gave the word "category" a different philosophical use. For him a category is a structured principle exemplifiable in scientifically ascertainable facts. In a form of judgment, any of the twelve forms or relations, principles of the understanding, constituting necessary conditions of experience, are categories. Kant sought to give an exhaustive list of pure forms of understanding from the forms of judgment in the traditional logic. His list of categories comprises three each of quantity, quality, relation and modality. (I. Kant. Critique of Pure Reason trans. Norman Kemp Smith, (London: MacMillan, 1952) B 106, 109, 202. Today the word "category" is used by

philosophers, if at all, for any supposedly ultimate type, without any settled convention about what it is a type of. Without ad hoc elucidation, the word is therefore nowadays a vague one.

Russell considers categories to be the class of all entities which have some predicate significantly (meaningfully) predicated of them. "A and B are of the same logical type, if and only if, given any fact of which A is a constituent, there is a corresponding fact which has B as a constituent, which either results by substituting B for A or is the negation of what so results." B. Russell, Logic and Knowledge (London: Allen and Unwin, 1956), p. 332. This appears to be close to G. Ryle's conception of a category. G. Ryle, "Categories," Logic and Language (2nd Series) (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1955) p. 80 and The Concept of Mind (London: Hutchinson, 1962) p. 16. See also Max Black, "Russell's Philosophy of Language," The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1944), p. 235. For Tillich, "Categories are the forms in which the mind grasps and shapes reality" (S.T., I., p. 192). They are "principles" or "ultimate notions" (S.T., I., p. 164). From the theological point of view, there are, for Tillich, four main categories: time, space, causality and substance (S.T., I., p. 82). Though he recognizes quality and quantity as categories, these are not discussed because they have "no direct theological significance." Tillich spells out the significance of the categories: "They express the union of being and non-being in everything finite. They articulate the courage which accepts the anxiety of non-being. The question of God is the question of the possibility of this courage" (S.T., I., p. 198).

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